STB Identification No.
32392

Environmental Assessment
Finance Docket No. 33928

Norfolk Southern Corporation
and
Norfolk Southern Railway Company –
Construction and Operation –
in
Indiana County, Pennsylvania

NORFOLK SOUTHERN

Service Date: November 20, 2002

Comment Due Date: December 19, 2002

Victoria J. Rutson, Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis

Information Contact:
Phillis Johnson-Ball
Environmental Project Manager
202.565.1530
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20423

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ES-1

ES 1.0 INTRODUCTION ES-1

ES 2.0 THE PROPOSED ACTION - SALTSBURG CONNECTION ES-1

ES 3.0 RELATED ACTIONS - THE KEYSTONE PROJECT ES-1

ES 4.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION ES-2

ES 5.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED ES-3

ES 5.1 PROPOSED ACTION ES-3
ES 5.1.1 Construction ES-3
ES 5.1.2 Operations ES-3

ES 5.2 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE ES-3

ES 5.3ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED FROM DETAILED EVALUATION ES-4
ES 5.3.1 Avonmore Route ES-4
ES 5.3.2 Blairsville Route ES-4
ES 5.3.3 Selection of the Environmentally Preferable Connection ES-5

ES 6.0 OVERVIEW OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION ES-5

ES 6.1 Land Use and Recreation ES-5

ES 6.2 Geology ES-6

ES 6.3 Water Resources ES-6

ES 6.4 Biological Resources ES-7

ES 6.5 Energy Use ES-7

ES 6.6 Hazardous Waste ES-8

ES 6.7 Air Quality ES-8

ES 6.8 Transportation and Safety ES-8

ES 6.9 Noise ES-9

ES 6.10 Cultural Resources ES-9

ES 6.11 Environmental Justice ES-9

ES 6.12 Cumulative Effects ES-10

ES 7.0 AGENCY CONSULTATION AND MITIGATION ES-10

ES.5 CONCLUSION AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ES-13

CHAPTER 1 PROPOSED ACTION & PURPOSE AND NEED 1-1

1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED ACTION 1-1

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED AND RELATED ACTIONS 1-2
1.1.1 Proposed Action 1-2
1.1.2 Construction Requirements 1-5
1.1.3 New Rail Traffic 1-5
1.1.4 Purpose And Need For The Proposed Action 1-5
1.1.5 Related Actions - Keystone Project 1-6

1.2 SEA'S ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS 1-7

CHAPTER 2 ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED 2-1

2.1 NO ACTION ("NO-BUILD") ALTERNATIVE 2-1

2.2 BUILD ALTERNATIVES 2-2
2.2.1 Build Alternatives Considered and Dismissed from Detailed Evaluation 2-2
2.2.1.1 The Avonmore Route 2-2
2.2.1.2 The Blairsville Route 2-5
2.2.2 Saltsburg Connection - Environmentally Preferred Alternative 2-5

2.3 SELECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ROUTE 2-6

CHAPTER 3 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT 3-1

3.1 LAND USE 3-1
3.1.1 Approach and Methodology 3-1
3.1.2 Existing Land Use 3-2
3.1.2.1 Farm and Agricultural Lands 3-2
3.1.2.2 Public Lands 3-5
3.1.2.3 Land Use Characteristics 3-5

3.1.3 Visual Environment 3-6
3.1.4 Coastal Zone Management Areas 3-6

3.2 ECONOMIC SETTING AND DEMOGRAPHICS 3-6
3.2.1 Approach and Methodology 3-7
3.2.2 Economic Characteristics 3-7
3.2.3 Population 3-8

3.3 GEOLOGY AND CLIMATE 3-8
3.3.1 Approach and Methodology 3-8
3.3.2 Geology 3-9
3.3.3 Soils 3-10
3.3.4 Climate 3-11

3.4 WATER RESOURCES 3-11
3.4.1 Approach and Methodology 3-11
3.4.2 Groundwater 3-12
3.4.3 Surface Water 3-12
3.4.4 Wetlands and Floodplains 3-13

3.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES 3-14
3.5.1 Approach and Methodology 3-14
3.5.2 Wildlife 3-14
3.5.3 Vegetation 3-19
3.5.4 Threatened and Endangered Species 3-19

3.6 ENERGY 3-20
3.6.1 Approach and Methodology 3-20
3.6.2 Energy Information 3-20

3.7 HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES AND TRANSPORT OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS 3-21
3.7.1 Approach and Methodology 3-21
3.7.2 Hazardous Waste Information 3-21

3.8 AIR QUALITY 3-22
3.8.1 Approach and Methodology 3-22
3.8.2 Air Quality Information 3-22

3.9 NOISE 3-23
3.9.1 Approach and Methodology 3-23
3.9.2 Existing Noise Environment 3-23

3.10 CULTURAL RESOURCES 3-23
3.10.1 Approach and Methodology 3-24

3.10.2 Pre-Historic Period 3-24
3.10.3 Historic Period 3-25
3.10.4 Saltsburg Connection Project Area Resources 3-26

3.11 RECREATION 3-26
3.11.1 Approach and Methodology 3-29
3.11.2 Public Use 3-29

3.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE 3-30
3.12.1 Approach and Methodology 3-30
3.12.2 Saltsburg Connection Project Area Information 3-31

3.13 TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY 3-32
3.13.1 Approach and Methodology 3-32
3.13.2 Existing Vehicular Traffic 3-32
3.13.3 At-Grade Crossings 3-35
3.13.4 Grade Separated Crossings 3-35

3.14 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT - KEYSTONE PROJECT 3-35

CHAPTER 4 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS 4-1

4.1 LAND USE 4-1
4.1.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-1
4.1.2 Land Use Impacts 4-1
4.1.3 Coastal Zone 4-3

4.2 SOCIOECONOMICS 4-3
4.2.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-3
4.2.2 Socioeconomic Impacts 4-3

4.3 GEOLOGY 4-4
4.3.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-4
4.3.2 Geologic Impacts 4-4

4.4 WATER RESOURCES 4-5
4.4.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-5
4.4.2 Permitting 4-5
4.4.3 Construction and Operational Impacts to Water Resources 4-6
4.4.4 Surface Water 4-6
4.4.5 Wetlands and Floodplains 4-8
4.4.6 Aquifers and Groundwater 4-9

4.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES 4-10
4.5.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-11

4.5.2 Wildlife Impacts 4-11
4.5.3 Vegetative Impacts 4-11
4.5.4 Threatened and Endangered Species Impacts 4-12

4.6 ENERGY 4-12
4.6.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-12
4.6.2 Energy Savings in Rail Operations 4-12
4.6.3 Energy Savings in Truck-to-Rail Diversions 4-13
4.6.4 Coal Use 4-13
4.6.5 Recyclable Commodities 4-13

4.7 HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES AND TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS 4-14
4.7.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-14
4.7.2 Hazardous Waste Impacts 4-14

4.8 AIR QUALITY 4-14
4.8.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-14
4.8.2 Air Quality Impacts Construction Impacts 4-14
4.8.3 Operations Impacts 4-15

4.9 NOISE 4-16
4.9.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-16
4.9.2 Noise Levels 4-16

4.10 CULTURAL RESOURCES 4-17
4.10.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-17
4.10.2 Archaeological Resources 4-18
4.10.3 Historic Architectural Resources 4-19

4.11 RECREATION 4-20
4.11.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-22
4.11.2 Impacts to Recreation 4-23

4.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE 4-23
4.12.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-23
4.12.2 Environmental Justice Impacts 4-23

4.13 TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY 4-24
4.13.1 Evaluation Criteria 4-24
4.13.2 Grade Separations 4-24
4.13.3 At-Grade Crossing 4-24
4.13.4 Construction Impacts 4-26
4.13.5 Operations Impacts 4-29
4.13.5.1 Impact on Vehicular Traffic 4-29

4.13.5.2 Risk of Derailment or Spills 4-29

4.14 RELATED ACTIONS - KEYSTONE PROJECT 4-30
4.14.1 Land Use 4-30
4.14.2 Transportation and Safety 4-31
4.14.3 Wetlands Resources 4-31
4.14.4 Energy 4-31
4.14.5 Air Quality 4-31
4.14.6 Noise 4-32

4.15 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS 4-32

CHAPTER 5 AGENCY CONSULTATION AND MITIGATION 5-1

5.1 AGENCY CONSULTATION 5-1
5.1.1 Summary of Agency Comments 5-1

5.2 SEA Recommended Mitigation Measures 5-2

5.3 CONCLUSION AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS 5-6

List of Figures

Page

Figure 1. Regional Location Map 1-3

Figure 2. Alternatives Considered 2-3

Figure 3. Physical Environment Study Area Location Map 3-3

Figure 4. Wetlands and Habitats 3-15

Figure 5. 100-Year Floodplains 3-17

Figure 6. National Register-Eligible Marshall Family House 3-27

Figure 7. 1990 Census Tract And Block Groups 3-33

Figure 8. Proposed National Register Boundary of Marshall Family House 4-21

Figure 9. Bell Road Crossing 4-27

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT GLOSSARY

Clarksburg Segment	Existing, out-of-service 10.89-mile Norfolk Southern rail line in Indiana County, PA to be rehabilitated by Norfolk Southern as part of the Shelocta Secondary.
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
EA	Environmental Assessment
Keystone Connection	Existing rail connection near Shelocta, PA that allows coal trains to access the Shelocta Industrial Running Track leading to the Keystone Plant.
Keystone Plant	Reliant Energy Keystone Generating Station.
Keystone Project	Norfolk Southern project to develop the Shelocta Secondary within Indiana County, PA in order to complete the Southern Route for the transport of coal by rail to the Keystone Plant.
Modification to the Keystone Connection	Norfolk Southern plan to modify the existing Keystone Connection near Shelocta, PA to provide rail access to the Shelocta Industrial Running Track from the south. The modification would add 1,450 feet of new rail in the southwest quadrant of the Keystone Connection.
National Register	*National Register of Historic Places*, created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
Northern Route	Rail route currently used by Norfolk Southern to transport coal to the Keystone Plant.
Norfolk Southern	Norfolk Southern Corporation and Norfolk Southern Railway Company
PAM	Public Affairs Management, SEA's independent third-party environmental consultant.

PDEA	Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment
Proposed Action	Norfolk Southern's proposal to construct and operate a new 5.26-mile rail line between Saltsburg and Clarksburg, in Indiana County, PA called the Saltsburg Connection.
Saltsburg Connection	The Proposed Action to construct and operate a new 5.26-mile rail line between Saltsburg and Clarksburg, in Indiana County, PA .
SEA	Section of Environmental Analysis of the STB
Shelocta Industrial Running Track	Industrial track owned by Keystone Plant, running westward from the Keystone Connection east of Shelocta, PA and terminating at the Keystone Plant. Used to deliver coal by rail to the Keystone Plant via either the existing Northern Route or the proposed Southern Route.
Shelocta Secondary	Rail route in Indiana County, PA to be developed by Norfolk Southern under the Keystone Project. Three rail segments combine to create the Shelocta Secondary: 1) the new Saltsburg Connection; 2) the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment; and 3) the modification to the Keystone Connection.
Southern Route	Southern rail route proposed by Norfolk Southern to transport coal to the Keystone Plant.
STB (or "the Board")	Surface Transportation Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Surface Transportation Board, Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) in response to an Application filed by the Norfolk Southern Corporation and Norfolk Southern Railway (collectively referred to in this document as Norfolk Southern) pursuant to 49 USC 10901 for authority from the Surface Transportation Board (Board or STB) to construct and operate a rail line between Saltsburg and Clarksburg, Pennsylvania, referred to in this document as the Saltsburg Connection.

ES 2.0 THE PROPOSED ACTION - SALTSBURG CONNECTION

The construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection, a 5.26-mile new single-track rail line between Saltsburg and Clarksburg in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, is the Proposed Action.

The construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection is part of a larger Norfolk Southern project, the Keystone Project, which would also involve the rehabilitation of an out-of-service line of railroad, and the modification of the existing Keystone Connection near Shelocta, Pennsylvania that currently allows coal trains to access the industrial track leading into the Reliant Energy Keystone Generating Plant (Keystone Plant). The Keystone Project would create a new route from the south (the Southern Route)[1] for Norfolk Southern to serve the electric-generating plant.

Although the construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection is the subject of Norfolk Southern's Application before the Board, and the focus of the EA, in order to provide a full understanding of the context for Norfolk Southern's proposal to develop the Saltsburg Connection, this EA includes an overview of Norfolk Southern's Keystone Project.

ES 3.0 RELATED ACTIONS - THE KEYSTONE PROJECT

To develop its Keystone Project, Norfolk Southern intends, in addition to the construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection, to rehabilitate 10.89 miles of out-of-service, but not abandoned rail line (Clarksburg Segment) and modify the existing Keystone

[1]The proposed Southern Route is composed of two parts: 1) the existing Norfolk Southern-operated Conemaugh Line from Freeport, Pennsylvania, running eastward to Saltsburg, Pennsylvania; and 2) the north/south running "Shelocta Secondary" from Saltsburg northward to Shelocta. Round trip operation of the Southern Route is 341 miles.

Connection by adding a new 1,450-foot rail link (modified Keystone Connection)[2] to the Shelocta Industrial Running Track which serves the Keystone Plant. Together the three segments -- the new Saltsburg Connection, the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment and the modified Keystone Connection -- would be known as the Shelocta Secondary.

The Shelocta Secondary would connect with the remainder of the Norfolk Southern rail network and, in particular, with the Norfolk Southern-operated Conemaugh Line at Saltsburg, to create a new southern route into the Keystone Plant. Norfolk Southern states that the Keystone Project proposal was developed primarily for the purpose of providing a more direct and efficient route to deliver coal to the Keystone Plant than is currently possible over the existing northern rail route, referred to here as the Northern Route.[3]

See Figure 1 for a depiction of the Saltsburg Connection, the Shelocta Secondary and the Southern Route.

ES 4.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

(See Chapters 1 and 2 For Details)

Norfolk Southern currently serves the Keystone Plant over the Northern Route, a circuitous and mountainous route utilizing trackage rights and leases over a substantial portion of the route. Coal moved over the Northern Route originates with Pittsburgh Seam coal producers located in southwest Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia on the Norfolk Southern-operated Monongahela Line.

Norfolk Southern states that the construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection and the larger Keystone Project would provide a shorter, more efficient, and

environmentally superior southern route for the rail delivery of coal to the Keystone Plant. Norfolk Southern contends that this route that would have greater capacity than the

[2]The proposed rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment and the modification of the Keystone Connection are not actions before the Board and do not trigger an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or the Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105. Board approval is not required to improve or upgrade an existing line that does not extend the railroad's territory. Nor is approval required to construct or modify an existing connection, so long as the purpose and effect is not to extend the railroad's territory.

[3]The Northern Route commences on the NS-operated Conemaugh Line at Shire Oaks Yard in Elrama, PA, continuing to Freeport Junction, PA; then moves via trackage rights over the Pittsburg & Shawmut Railroad mainline to West Mosgrove, PA; then via trackage rights on the Buffalo &Pittsburgh Railroad main line to Riker Yard near Punxsutawney, PA; over trackage rights on the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Riker running Track to Cloe, PA; then over a CSX-owned line to Creekside, PA; and southward over a NS-operated line to the Keystone Connection. Round trip distance of the Northern Route is 443 miles.

existing Northern Route and that it would save time, crews and locomotives required to serve the Keystone Plant. Although the Southern Route would initially serve no shippers other than the Keystone Plant, Norfolk Southern states that the new route would provide an efficient service outlet to the rest of the Norfolk Southern system should future businesses locate in the area served by the route.

ES 5.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

(See Chapters 1 and 2 for details)

ES 5.1 PROPOSED ACTION

As stated above, the Proposed Action is the construction and operation of the 5.26-mile long Saltsburg Connection. Norfolk Southern proposes to construct and operate the new rail line between Saltsburg and Clarksburg in Indiana County, Pennsylvania in order to more efficiently serve the Keystone Plant.

ES 5.1.1 Construction

The proposed route of the Saltsburg Connection would be on the east side of the Blacklegs Creek Valley between Saltsburg and Clarksburg, Pennsylvania. The prevailing grades would not exceed 1.00 percent. The maximum curvature of 7 degrees, 30 minutes (7^30') would permit operations of 25 miles per hour. The project would include the construction of two multiple span bridges to provide two grade-separated highway/rail crossings over State Routes 3007 and 286, one at-grade highway/rail crossing at Bell Road, and several large box culverts. Construction of all track and rail bed would be in accordance with methods approved by the American Railway Engineering Association.

ES 5.1.2 Operations

Approximately five 130-car coal unit trains per week, at a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour, would operate over the proposed Saltsburg Connection. Three conventional high-adhesion 6-axle diesel locomotives would move each 130-car unit train. Each unit train would transport approximately 14,040 tons of coal.

ES 5.2 NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No-Action Alternative (the continued rail use of the Northern Route and truck transportation), Norfolk Southern would not construct a new rail line, and coal would continue to be delivered to the Keystone Plant using the existing rail and highway infrastructure.

Moreover, if the proposed rail line is not built, the environmental impacts associated with

the build alternatives would not occur. There would be no need for additional right-of-way, impacts on wetlands would not occur, and watercourses, surface drainage or potentially historic archaeological or historic properties would not be potentially adversely impacted. In addition, a new at-grade rail crossing at Bell Road would not be required and no related impacts to vehicles at that intersection would occur.

However, because portions of the Northern Route are substandard, it is possible that a proportion of the Keystone Plant coal supply currently delivered by rail could decrease over time as the line deteriorates. The number of trucks delivering coal via local roads could increase, resulting in greater amounts of vehicular traffic on local roads and greater vehicular emissions.

ES 5.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED FROM DETAILED EVALUATION

Norfolk Southern identified three build alternatives to more fully assess the potential of those alternative rail line connections to meet the project's purpose and need. Two of these alternatives, the Avonmore Route and the Blairsville Route, were eliminated from further consideration, as discussed below. Figure 2-1 shows the general location of these routes that were considered as alternatives.

ES 5.3.1 Avonmore Route

The Avonmore Route would consist of 14 to16 miles of new rail line that would connect with the Norfolk Southern-operated Conemaugh Line southwest of Saltsburg near Avonmore. Major grades along the alignment would require either the construction of a tunnel or extensive hillside cuts to meet rail operation requirements. To construct the Avonmore Route, Norfolk Southern would need to acquire new right-of-way for its entire length.

This alternative was not considered for further evaluation because of the prohibitive cost of constructing a tunnel or performing extensive grading, property acquisition requirements, and the route's overall length; greater right-of-way acquisition; and costly modifications to the newly redesigned infrastructure and operations at the Keystone Plant.

ES 5.3.2 Blairsville Route

The Blairsville Route would consist of restoring and rehabilitating more than 30 miles of rail track. The route would utilize Norfolk Southern’s existing Blairsville Line east from Saltsburg to Blairsville and north toward Homer City. At Homer City, Norfolk Southern would construct a connection to the inactive CSX Indiana Secondary Line. The connection would be over an abandoned former Penn Central right-of-way. From this connection, the Blairsville Route would run northwest through the center of the campus of

Indiana University and the downtown area of the City of Indiana, PA, to Creekside, PA, over portions of an abandoned Penn Central line and the CSX Indiana Secondary Line. At Creekside, the Blairsville route would join the existing Northern Route and continue southwest to the Keystone Plant.

This alternative could potentially cause significant socioeconomic, cultural resource, recreational, and natural resource impacts, including constructing and operating a new rail line at the center of the campus of Indiana University and in the downtown area of the City of Indiana. This at-grade track would likely increase safety risks to pedestrians. Cultural and recreational resources in the region would also be adversely impacted. The Blairsville Route would also require the construction of track through wetland systems and waterways of a high quality. Norfolk Southern also concluded that the Blairsville Route would not meet the project needs as effectively as the Proposed Action because the overall length, or circuitry, of the route offered little transportation advantage and, when combined with the route's steeper grades, would result in greater fuel use and air emissions than the Proposed Action. The cost of extensive rehabilitation, including a major bridge replacement, would be prohibitive. In addition, the property required for purchase to acquire right-of-way would be greater than that of the Proposed Action. For these reasons the Blairsville Route was not considered for further evaluation.

ES 5.3.3 Selection of the Environmentally Preferable Connection

After a review of the build alternatives, SEA determined that the proposed Saltsburg Connection (the Proposed Action) provides the environmentally preferred location for the new rail line. This route is environmentally preferable to the other two alternative build alignments for a number of reasons. The route would require the least amount of new construction – 5.26 miles – and would not disrupt any urban or residentially developed areas, or potentially conflict with pedestrian traffic. The Proposed Action would not require tunneling or extensive hillside cuts.

ES 6.0 OVERVIEW OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

(See Chapters 3 and 4 for details)

ES 6.1 Land Use and Recreation

The Proposed Action traverses a sparsely populated rural environment in southwestern Indiana County. Agricultural uses predominate in the Saltsburg Connection project area in the form of locally-owned farms. No Prime Agricultural farmland is present in the area of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not conflict with any land use plans or zoning ordinances at the local, county, or state level. No residents would be displaced as a result of the Proposed Action. Approximately 109 acres of land would be disturbed to construct the proposed rail line segment between Saltsburg and Clarksburg. This land

consists of croplands, open fields, residential uses, wetlands, and highway or railroad right-of-way. Actual permanent conversion of land to rail uses consisting of the rail roadbed and maintained right-of-way along the Saltsburg Connection would total approximately 23 acres. Norfolk Southern intends for the remaining approximately 86 acres to return to a natural pre-build condition.

Recreational resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area consist mainly of Blacklegs Creek, a local waterway that is used for recreational fishing. The Proposed Action would have one grade-separated crossing of the creek, but would not encroach on the recreational opportunities associated with this waterway. Construction and operation of the proposed rail line would not create a loss of or adversely affect access to public recreational areas.

ES 6.2 Geology

The geologic nature of the Saltsburg Connection project area is characterized by rolling to narrow ridges and hills of medium relief with stable moderate to steep natural slopes. The construction of the Proposed Action would result in the modification of landforms in areas where there would be substantial cut and fill activities to create the rail bed. Approximately .33 million cubic yards (MM CY) is to be used for fill and approximately 1.10 MM CY is excess material. SEA concluded that construction activities would result in minor local changes in the local geology, which would not be significant in the context of the geology of the Saltsburg Connection project area and the region. Post-construction mitigation measures such as re-grading and re-vegetation would return the undeveloped areas to pre-construction conditions.

ES 6.3 Water Resources

Two aquifers, the Casselman Formation and the Glenshaw Formation, are present in the Saltsburg Connection project area. The proposed construction is not expected to affect these aquifers. No significant adverse impacts to groundwater are reasonably expected to occur. Surface waters in the Saltsburg Connection project area are Blacklegs Creek, Marshall Run, and a number of unnamed tributaries. Construction of the waterway structures may result in some alteration to watercourse beds, possible loss of aquatic and riparian habitats through the enclosure of waterways and possible loss of embankments through the use of riprap, concrete or other bank stabilization measures.

Federal and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania permits and certifications are required to construct a structure in a watercourse. The permit to construct in a watercourse would be applied for through a Joint Permit Application (JPA) submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). The JPA for the Saltsburg Connection would identify each structure to be constructed, proposed erosion and sedimentation control, and a description and quantification of all potential impacts to

wetlands. The JPA would also include a mitigation plan to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce or eliminate environmental impacts from permitted activities.

Construction of the Saltsburg Connection would not have a significant impact on the total area of surface waters. No surface waters would be filled, nor would construction alter the volume or speed of water flow. Neither construction of nor operation over the Saltsburg Connection would result in discharges of heavy metals or acidity – the pollutants that currently impair Blacklegs Creek from attaining its Cold Water Fishes (CWF) designated use. SEA has concluded that with completion of the JPA and the implementation of the associated mitigation required by federal, state, and local agencies, the Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts to watercourses.

ES 6.4 Biological Resources

Several habitat types are found in the Saltsburg Connection project area, including forests, open fields, wetlands, and surface waters. Terrestrial vegetative communities found in the Saltsburg Connection project area include palustrine wetlands, open fields, and forests. Based on field work and coordination with the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), SEA has determined that no Federal or state listed threatened and endangered species or related critical habitat exist in the area. Construction and operation of the new rail line may temporarily displace local terrestrial wildlife and decrease available habitat for some wildlife species because of increased noise from construction equipment and the presence of humans. However, such disturbances are expected to be temporary and not result in any major redistribution of resident species. The loss of habitat would not be substantial given the abundance of similar habitat within the vicinity of the Proposed Action and region. The Proposed Action would not result in the loss of any threatened or endangered species; loss or degradation of critical habitat, sanctuaries, refuges, migration corridors for threatened or endangered species; or loss of large numbers of non-threatened or non-endangered species.

ES 6.5 Energy Use

Energy benefits are expected to be derived from the reduction of the round trip distance to and from the Keystone Plant. Benefits would also result from the increased truck-to-rail diversions as the amount of Pittsburgh Seam coal transported by rail increases and the amount of Central Pennsylvania coal transported by truck is reduced. Norfolk Southern could realize fuel efficiencies of 702.9 gross ton-mile (GTM)/gallon for the rail transport of coal via the Saltsburg Connection, compared to an average truck (medium to long haul) fuel efficiency of 140 GTM/gallon for the same amount of coal transported.

ES 6.6 Hazardous Waste

The Proposed Action would neither disturb nor generate hazardous wastes during construction or operation. A Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment of the Saltsburg Connection construction area was conducted. No soils or sediments that require special handling or worker protection measures were identified.

ES 6.7 Air Quality

Indiana County is in attainment for all pollutants listed in the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Proposed Action would not cause any significant deterioration of the regional air quality. The construction phase of the proposed development of the rail line could temporarily affect air quality in the immediate Saltsburg Connection project area. During construction, land clearing and transportation of fill material from borrow areas may result in a temporary increase in fugitive dust emissions. Additionally, open burning of debris and any vegetation that is removed could contribute to temporary increases in particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and carbon monoxide emissions. Norfolk Southern would apply standard construction mitigation measures (best management practices) to reduce fugitive dust emissions during all construction activities. Air emissions related to the temporary construction activities are unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on air quality due to their temporary, local, and controlled nature. Given the potential for the combined truck and train diesel fuel savings, impacts to air quality would be beneficial.

ES 6.8 Transportation and Safety

The proposed Saltsburg Connection would require that rail bridges be constructed over State Route (S.R.) 286 and S.R. 3007. These would take several months to build and would require the periodic closing of roads or traffic delays to the public. These closings and delays would be temporary and limited to periods during construction of the bridge piers directly adjacent to travel lanes and the staging/setting of the bridge spans. One at-grade crossing at Bell Road is planned. This crossing is not expected to result in vehicular delays or delays to emergency response vehicles warranting mitigation. Fire companies are located on both sides of the proposed Bell Road at-grade crossing.

Norfolk Southern would implement an inspection and maintenance program to minimize the potential for derailments. In addition, Norfolk Southern would implement a spill prevention and emergency response plan in the event of a coal spill or derailment. Operation of trains on the proposed rail line would have no impacts on existing rail traffic. The unit coal trains Norfolk Southern would operate over the Saltsburg Connection do not involve the transportation of hazardous materials.

ES 6.9 Noise

The noise environment in the Saltsburg Connection project area is typical of a rural environment with intermittent vehicular traffic noise emanating from SR 286. Train noise sources include diesel locomotives engine and wheel/rail interaction noise (or wayside noise) and horn noise. Wayside noise affects all locations in the vicinity of the rail line, and generally diminishes with distance from the source.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has established a set of noise standards for the operation of locomotives that are applicable to Norfolk Southern rail operations. No significant noise impacts are expected for the project. Norfolk Southern would operate in compliance of the FRA locomotive noise standards. A reduction in truck noise may be realized through anticipated truck to rail diversions.

Horn noise is an additional noise source at grade crossings, and also generally diminishes with distance. FRA has issued a proposed rule covering the sounding of locomotive horns at highway-rail grade crossings. The proposed rule would implement a statutory requirement that locomotive horns sound at each highway-rail grade crossing unless certain exceptions are met. The proposed rule describes Supplementary Safety Measures that a community may use to establish a quiet zone within which locomotive horns would not be sounded. The rule would also establish an upper limit for the loudness of train horns. The proposed rule will not be effective until FRA completes its review of the regulation.

ES 6.10 Cultural Resources

Cultural resource investigations were conducted in the Saltsburg Connection project area to identify the presence of historic architectural and archaeological resources. The Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) identified three prehistoric and one historic archaeological sites and one historic architectural resource property within the Saltsburg Connection project area that are potentially eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places (National Register)*. Construction of the proposed line may impact portions of the three prehistoric and one historic archaeological sites, but not the historic architectural resource property.

ES 6.11 Environmental Justice

The demographic data for Indiana County did not reveal any populations in the Saltsburg Connection project area that would meet the criteria for low-income or minority populations. Based on this review of the demographics of communities within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project, implementation of the Proposed Action would have neither a disproportionately high nor adverse environmental impact on minority or low-income communities.

ES 6.12 Cumulative Effects

The only other planned project in the vicinity of the Saltsburg Connection is the completion of the Keystone Project. The Keystone Project consists of the development of the Norfolk Southern Shelocta Secondary rail line, which would be composed of the Saltsburg Connection, the rehabilitation of 10.89 miles of currently out of service, but intact track (Clarksburg Segment), and the modification of the existing Keystone Connection by adding 1,450 feet of new track (modification of the Keystone Connection). Impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Action coupled with impacts of the implementation of the Clarksburg Segment rehabilitation and the Keystone Connection modification of the Keystone Project are not expected to result in any significant cumulative environmental impacts.

ES 7.0 AGENCY CONSULTATION AND MITIGATION

Based on the information available to date, consultations with appropriate agencies, and extensive environmental analysis, SEA developed preliminary environmental mitigation measures to address the environmental impacts of the proposed construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection.

SEA emphasizes that the recommended environmental mitigation measures in the EA are preliminary and it invites public and agency comments on these proposed environmental mitigation measures. In order for SEA to effectively assess the comments, it is helpful if the public is specific regarding desired mitigation and the reasons for it.

SEA preliminarily recommends that the Board impose the following mitigation measures in any decision approving the proposed rail line construction and operation in this proceeding.

Transportation and Safety

1. Norfolk Southern shall coordinate at-grade crossing construction with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Indiana County in order to minimize traffic delay during crossing construction. Norfolk Southern shall use appropriate signs and barricades to control traffic during construction.

2. Norfolk Southern shall develop internal emergency response plans for construction to allow for agencies and individuals to be notified in case of an emergency. Norfolk Southern shall provide the emergency response plans to appropriate state and local entities.

3. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall install, at its sole cost, active rail/highway grade warning devices consisting of pole and cantilever mast mounted

flashing lights and gates, and roadway modifications to improve the geometric conditions of Bell Road to enhance vehicular sight distance, subject to the approval of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

4. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall improve, at its sole cost, the intersection of Bell and Rose Roads to enhance the level of safety at the existing intersection in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

5. Norfolk Southern or its designated contractor shall obtain permission for and scheduling of lane restrictions or road closures, as well as detour approvals, in coordination with the appropriate public transportation agency. Norfolk Southern or its designated contractor shall be responsible for the cost of all permits, detours, coordination with local officials and agencies, and public notifications related to temporary lane restrictions or road closures.

6. Norfolk Southern shall consider maintenance of emergency response capabilities and school bus schedules in planning and executing the necessary road work.

7. Norfolk Southern shall implement an inspection and maintenance program to minimize the potential for derailments and shall implement a spill prevention and emergency response plan in the event of a coal spill or derailment.

Land Use

8. Norfolk Southern shall ensure that all areas disturbed by project-related construction activities which are not located on the railroad's property (such as access roads, haul roads, crane pad and borrow pits) are promptly restored as closely to their original condition, as is practical, following conclusion of project-related construction activities at that site.

9. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall ensure that all controlled blasting work required during excavation of roadbed cut shall be conducted by contractors in strict compliance with applicable regulations. In addition, all controlled blasting work shall be performed utilizing best management practices which include:

   - establishment and implementation of appropriate safety measures and procedures before, during and following all blasting activity for the protection of the public and employees;
   - performance of pre-blast surveys of adjacent properties and structures; and
   - performance of seismic monitoring during the blasting process.

Water Resources

10. Norfolk Southern shall obtain all necessary federal, state, and local permits if construction activities require the alteration of wetlands, or other water bodies or if these activities would cause soil or other material to wash into these water resources. Norfolk Southern shall use appropriate techniques to minimize impacts to wetlands and water bodies.

11. Norfolk Southern shall disturb the smallest area practicable around any waterway.

12. In instances in which Norfolk Southern uses contractors to apply herbicides, for right-of-way maintenance, Norfolk Southern shall use only contractors trained in herbicide application and shall require those contractors to follow label directions in applying herbicides and limit the amount potentially entering waterways. Norfolk Southern shall require contractors to use only herbicides regulated for such uses with Environmental Protection Agency and follow all state regulations that requires their use.

13. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall comply with mitigation requirements contained in the joint permit to be reviewed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, including the creation of new wetlands acreage to replace altered wetlands in such replacement ratio as the joint permit shall specify.

Biological Resources

14. Norfolk Southern shall use Best Management Practices to control erosion, runoff, and surface instability during construction, including seeding fiber mats, straw mulch, plastic lined slope drains, and other erosion control devices. Once the track is constructed. Norfolk Southern shall establish vegetation in the embankment slope to provide permanent cover and prevent erosion. If erosion develops, Norfolk Southern shall take steps to develop other appropriate erosion control procedures.

Air Quality

15. Norfolk Southern shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations regarding the control of fugitive dust. Fugitive dust emissions created during construction shall be minimized by using such control methods as water spraying, installation of wind barriers, and chemical treatment.

Noise

16. Norfolk Southern shall control temporary noise from construction equipment through the use and maintenance of muffler systems on machinery.

17. Norfolk Southern shall comply with the Federal Rail Administration regulations (49 CFR Part 210) establishing decibel limits for train operations.

Cultural Resources

18. If Norfolk Southern identifies any undiscovered archaeological remains or other cultural resources during construction activities, Norfolk Southern shall immediately cease work, and contact the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Officer regarding appropriate measures to protect the resource.

19. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall complete a Phase III archaeological investigation of the four sites identified by the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission as potentially eligible for listing on the *National Register*. Norfolk Southern shall prepare a report on the Phase III archaeological investigation for review by the PHMC. Pending completion of the Section 106 process, the Norfolk Southern shall ensure that the four archaeological sites – the Reed Site (Cribb Site) (36IN424), the Olliver I site portion of (36IN157) in the proposed right-of-way, the Olliver III site the portion of (36IN160) in the proposed right-of-way, and the Olliver IV site (36IN428) are not adversely impacted.

ES.5 CONCLUSION AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date and its independent analysis, SEA preliminarily concludes that construction and operation of the proposed rail line would have no significant environmental impacts if the Board imposes and Norfolk Southern implements the mitigation recommended above. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary in this proceeding.

SEA specifically invites comments on all aspects of this EA, including suggestions for additional mitigation measures. SEA will consider all comments received in response to the EA in making its final recommendations to the Board. The Board will consider the entire environmental record, SEA's final recommendations, including final recommended mitigation measures, and the environmental comments in making its final decision in this proceeding.

Comments (an original and 10 copies) should be sent to Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20423. The lower left hand corner of the envelope should be marked: Attention: Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball,

Environmental Comments, Finance Docket No. 33928. Questions may also be directed to Ms. Johnson-Ball at this address or by telephoning (202) 565-1530.

Date made available to the public: November 20th, 2002

Comment due date: December 19th, 2002

CHAPTER 1
PROPOSED ACTION & PURPOSE AND NEED

1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

On December 27, 2001, Norfolk Southern Corporation and Norfolk Southern Railway Company (Norfolk Southern) filed an Application (Application) pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Section 10901 with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate a 5.26-mile line of railroad between Saltsburg and Clarksburg in Indiana County, Pennsylvania (the Saltsburg Connection, or Proposed Action).

This Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes the construction and operation of the proposed Saltsburg Connection rail line and assesses whether the Proposed Action would have any significant effects on the environment.

While the construction and operation of the new 5.26-mile Saltsburg Connection is the subject of Norfolk Southern's Application, the Saltsburg Connection is part of a larger Norfolk Southern project, the Keystone Project, which would allow Norfolk Southern to deliver coal from mines in southwestern Pennsylvania and elsewhere to the Reliant Energy Keystone Generating Station (Keystone Plant)[1] at Shelocta, Pennsylvania over a new southern rail route (Southern Route). The greatest portion of the proposed new Southern Route, from Freeport Junction, PA to a connection point west of the Saltsburg Tunnel on the Norfolk Southern-operated Conemaugh Line, is already in existence and is an active rail line. The Keystone Project would develop the remaining portion of the Southern Route, referred to as the Shelocta Secondary. The Shelocta Secondary consists of three parts that would be developed under the Keystone Project: the proposed Saltsburg Connection, an existing rail line referred to as the Clarksburg Segment that is being rehabilitated by Norfolk Southern, and an existing rail connection referred to as the Keystone Connection whose alignment would be modified by Norfolk Southern. See Figure 1 which depicts the project region.

Board approval of the rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment and modification of the

[1]The Keystone Plant is an electric-generating plant located in Armstrong County, Pennsylvania. Reliant Energy operates the Keystone Plant as part of a consortium of legal holders. These owners are: Atlantic City Electric Company; Constellation Power Source Generation, Inc.; Keystone Power, LLC; Reliant Energy Mid-Atlantic Power Holdings, LLC; PPL Montour, LLC; Exelon Generation Company, LLC; and PSEG Fossil, LLC. The Keystone Plant is reached by rail via the Shelocta Industrial Running Track, owned by the Keystone Plant. The proposed new Southern Route would connect with the Shelocta Industrial Running Track to access the Keystone Plant.

Keystone Connection is not required.[2] These latter two portions of the Keystone Project to develop the Shelocta Secondary are described in this EA in order to assist the reader in understanding the context for Norfolk Southern's proposal to develop the Saltsburg Connection.

Because proposed rail operations over the Saltsburg Connection would also impact the other portions of the Shelocta Secondary, Chapter 4 of this EA assesses as part of the overall effects of the Proposed Action the impacts of rail operations in the areas along the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment and the modified alignment of the Keystone Connection. In sum, this EA analyzes the impacts of the Proposed Action to determine whether the construction of the proposed Saltsburg Connection rail line and the overall impact of operation of rail traffic over the proposed Saltsburg Connection and larger Keystone Project would have any significant effects on the environment.

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED AND RELATED ACTIONS

1.1.1 Proposed Action

The construction and operation of the proposed Saltsburg Connection is referred to throughout this EA as the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action to construct and operate the Saltsburg Connection in Indiana County includes the construction of 5.26 miles of new single track.[3] The Saltsburg Connection would connect the Norfolk Southern-operated Conemaugh Line,[4] at a point near S.R. 286 in Conemaugh Township north of Saltsburg and just west of the Saltsburg Tunnel, to the currently out-of-service Norfolk Southern Clarksburg Segment, at a point near Harpers's Run north of Clarksburg. From its southern connection with the Conemaugh Line, the Saltsburg Connection would wind northeast along the south side of Blacklegs Creek toward Clarksburg. After reaching Clarksburg, the proposed rail line route would travel approximately 2,000 feet into Young Township where it would connect with the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment.

---

[2]Board approval is not required to improve or upgrade an existing line without extending the railroad's territory. Nor is approval required to construct or modify an existing connection, so long as the purpose and effect is not to extend the railroad's territory.

[3]According to Norfolk Southern, they or one of their respective subsidiaries would construct, and Norfolk Southern would operate, the new line of railroad.

[4] The Norfolk Southern-operated Conemaugh Line is the southernmost segment of Norfolk Southern's proposed new Southern Route to serve the Keystone Plant. The Shelocta Secondary would connect with the Conemaugh Line at Saltsburg to complete the new Southern Route.

REGIONAL LOCATION MAP

SOURCE: VISUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

STB	SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	DATE: OCTOBER 2002 SCALE: 1" = 2.94 MILES	FIGURE 1

1.1.2 Construction Requirements

Construction of all track and rail bed would be in accordance with methods approved by the American Railway Engineering Association.

The prevailing grades of the Saltsburg Connection would not exceed 1.00 percent. The maximum curvature of 7 degrees, 30 minutes (7^30') would permit operations of 25 miles per hour. The Saltsburg Connection would traverse Blacklegs Creek, Marshall Run and several intermittent tributaries of Blacklegs Creek by means of two pipe culverts, three box culverts and two bridges. The track would traverse undeveloped wooded areas, cultivated agricultural fields and a few residential properties at an average elevation above mean sea level of approximately 900 feet at the southern end to 950 feet at the northern end. The area is generally sparsely populated.

The project would include the construction of two multiple span bridges to provide two grade-separated highway/rail crossings over State Routes 3007 and 286, and one at-grade highway/rail crossing at Bell Road.

1.1.3 New Rail Traffic

Norfolk Southern intends to operate approximately five 130-car coal unit trains per week, at a maximum speed of 25 miles per hour, over the proposed new Saltsburg Connection to serve the Keystone Plant. Three conventional high-adhesion 6-axle diesel locomotives would move each 130-car unit train. Each unit train would transport approximately 14,040 tons of coal. Norfolk Southern states that, operating over the new Southern Route, 164 130-car coal unit trains per year would be required to transport the current volume of coal by rail to the Keystone Plant (approximately 2.3 million tons). This compares to 213 100-car unit coal trains, presently powered by four special steerable truck 6-axle diesel locomotives, required to transport that same volume of coal via the existing Northern Route. On an annualized basis, Norfolk Southern expects that the Keystone Plant, in the future, will request that Norfolk Southern increase the tonnage of Pittsburgh Seam Coal delivered by rail to levels exceeding the capacity limitations of the Northern Route. Norfolk Southern states that should the Keystone Plant request additional rail delivery of coal, Norfolk Southern could meet the Keystone Plant's increased demand through operation over the Southern Route of an additional one to two trains per week, or approximately seven trains per week.

1.1.4 Purpose And Need For The Proposed Action

Norfolk Southern states that the construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection is part of the development of the Southern Route that would provide a shorter, more efficient, and environmentally superior route for the delivery of coal to the Keystone Plant. Norfolk Southern contends that the Southern Route would have greater capacity than the

existing Northern Route and that it would save time, crews, and locomotives required to serve the Keystone Plant. Most of the coal Norfolk Southern delivers to the Keystone Plant is Pittsburgh Seam coal mined in southwestern Pennsylvania. Norfolk Southern believes that the construction and operation of the Southern Route would provide a more direct rail connection to the Keystone Plant and reduce the round-trip transportation distance to deliver coal to the Keystone Plant by approximately 100 miles per train trip.

Norfolk Southern currently delivers approximately 2.3 million tons of coal on an annual basis to the Keystone Plant over the existing Northern Route under a long-term contract (begun on January 1, 2000) with the Keystone Plant. In addition to the coal delivered by rail, another approximately 2.2 million tons per year of Central Pennsylvania coal currently arrives at the Keystone Plant by truck. Norfolk Southern anticipates that the Keystone Plant may request the delivery by rail of additional tonnage of Pittsburgh Seam coal, with a commensurate reduction in truck deliveries of Central Pennsylvania coal. Should this change in demand for rail-delivered Pittsburgh Seam coal occur, Norfolk Southern believes the existing Northern Route would not have the capacity to meet all of the Keystone Plant's coal needs. Norfolk Southern states that the circuitous Northern Route imposes operational constraints for the movement of coal because the track's steep ruling grade of 1.83 percent cannot accommodate more than 100 coal cars per unit train. Norfolk Southern indicates that the Northern Route's fragile infrastructure also requires either four specialized, steerable-truck 6-axle locomotives (currently used by Norfolk Southern) or eight 4-axle locomotives (used by Norfolk Southern prior to early 2001).

Norfolk Southern states that in addition to enhancing its service to the Keystone Plant, the proposed new rail construction could potentially provide Norfolk Southern with the ability to provide common carrier rail service should future businesses locate in the area served by the route. No such new businesses are known at this time.

1.1.5 Related Actions - Keystone Project

The purpose of the Keystone Project, which includes as one of its components the construction and operation of the Proposed Action, is to develop a new southern rail route, referred to as the Southern Route, for delivery of coal to the Keystone Plant. The greatest length of the Southern Route, from Elmara, PA to Saltsburg, PA, is active rail line currently operated by Norfolk Southern. In order to complete the Southern Route, Norfolk Southern proposes through its Keystone Project to develop the Shelocta Secondary rail line. Development of the Shelocta Secondary would consist of the Proposed Action, as described above, as well as the following segments:

> Clarksburg Segment: Rehabilitation of 10.89 miles of track running northward from Clarksburg to Shelocta. The rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment would connect at its southernmost end with the new Saltsburg Connection at Clarksburg and at its northernmost end with the proposed modification of the Keystone

Connection at Shelocta to provide a southerly approach to the Keystone Plant's industrial track. The currently out-of-service Clarksburg Segment is generally intact, with roadbeds in stable condition. Rehabilitation work on the Clarksburg Segment is on-going. Upgrading, modernization and operation of this segment does not require Board approval.

Modification of the Keystone Connection: The alignment of the existing Keystone Connection at Shelocta presently permits train traffic to approach the Keystone Plant via the plant-owned Shelocta Industrial Running Track only from the north. Norfolk Southern currently uses the existing northern approach to the Keystone Connection to transport coal to the Keystone Plant via the Northern Route. Under the modification plan, the existing alignment of the Keystone Connection would be modified by the addition of 1,450 feet of new single track in the southwest quadrant to permit trains operating over the proposed Shelocta Secondary to approach the Keystone Plant from the south via the Shelocta Industrial Running Track. This action does not require Board approval.

Modification of the existing Keystone Connection (the existing Keystone Connection is part of the Northern Route that provides current access to the Keystone Plant would provide direct access from the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment to the Keystone Plant via the Shelocta Industrial Running Track, creating a southerly access to the Keystone Plant. The modified approach would traverse an intermittent stream, Anthony Run, by means of a box culvert. The approach would also cross an existing open water pond wetland.

As indicated above, the Norfolk Southern Keystone Project would develop the Shelocta Secondary portion of the Southern Route by combining the Proposed Action to construct and operate the new Saltsburg Connection with the rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment and the modification of the Keystone Connection.

1.2 SEA'S ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) prepared this EA in response to Norfolk Southern's Application seeking authority to construct and operate the Saltsburg Connection in Indiana County, Pennsylvania

SEA prepared this EA to ensure that the Proposed Action complies with the statutory requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended,[5] the Board's environmental regulations,[6] and other applicable rules and/or regulations.

[5] 42 USC 4321 et.seq.

[6] 49 CFR Part 1105

SEA is responsible for conducting the Board's environmental review of the Proposed Action. The Board has adopted the former ICC environmental regulations[7] that govern the environmental review process and outline procedures for preparing environmental documents. SEA reviewed the Proposed Action and determined that, because the proposed rail line construction and operation is not expected to result in significant environmental impacts, an EA would be appropriate.

The proposed rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment and the modification of the Keystone Connection are not actions before the Board and do not trigger an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Board's environmental laws are not triggered in cases where the Board lacks jurisdiction.[8] As such, the rehabilitation and modification activities are not analyzed as part of the Proposed Action.

However, the overall impacts associated with operation of the Saltsburg Connection to reach the Keystone Plant, include impacts that may occur beyond the Saltsburg Connection project area along the Clarksburg Segment and the modified Keystone Connection. Where the operational impacts of the Saltsburg Connection extending along the Clarksburg Segment or the modification to the Keystone Connection differ from or are in addition to the operational impacts within the Saltsburg Connection project area, they are described in this EA.

In preparing the EA, SEA identified and analyzed issues and areas of potential environmental impact as a result of the Proposed Action to construct and operate the new Saltsburg Connection rail line, consulted with other government agencies, reviewed agency and public comments, and developed mitigation measures to avoid or reduce anticipated impacts on the environment. SEA also considered pertinent Federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders.

SEA analyzed Norfolk Southern's proposed rail construction and operation as described in its Application and supporting statements, the Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment ("PDEA")[9], supporting statements, and technical studies conducted by Norfolk Southern's environmental consultants, URS Corporation. The PDEA included

---

[7]49 CFR Part 1105

[8]Board approval is not required to improve or upgrade an existing line that does not extend the railroad's territory. Nor is approval required to construct or modify an existing connection, so long as the purpose and effect is not to extend the railroad's territory.

[9]The Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR 1506.5(b) permit an Applicant to prepare an EA. The Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.4(g) permit an Applicant to prepare an Environmental Report in the form of a PDEA.

information that had been collected to date and environmental information required by the Board's environmental rules. SEA used the PDEA as a starting point in the preparation of the EA for this application for construction and operation of a new rail line.

SEA prepared the EA based on its independent analysis of the proposed rail construction and operation, which included the verification and analysis of the projected rail operations, land use, wildlife habitat, surface water and wetland surveys, effects to biological resources, and archaeological and historic architectural resource surveys.

SEA approved Public Affairs Management (PAM) to act as the Board's independent third-party consultant, in accordance with the Board's environmental regulations. The third-party consultant worked on behalf of the Board and solely under SEA's supervision, direction, and controll to collect the needed environmental information and to compile it into the Environmental Assessment, which was submitted to SEA for its review, verification, and approval. In addition, SEA's independent third-party consultant coordinated with Norfolk Southern and its environmental consultant and visited the proposed rail line construction site to document the existing conditions and assess the potential effects of the Proposed Action on the environment. The third-party consultant also initiated contact with the various Federal, state and local agencies and jurisdictions that might have an interest in the project. A list of agency contacts is presented in Appendix A of this document.

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

CHAPTER 2
ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

This chapter describes the alternatives considered for the proposed rail line connection. These are the Proposed Action alternative, the No Action alternative, and two build construction alternatives considered and eliminated from further consideration in the planning stages of the project.

2.1 NO ACTION ("NO-BUILD") ALTERNATIVE

SEA considered a No Action alternative as part of the environmental review of the Norfolk Southern proposed action. Under the No Action alternative, Norfolk Southern would not construct a new rail line, and coal would continue to be delivered to the Keystone Plant using the existing Northern Route and the local highway infrastructure. The Keystone Plant receives approximately 4.5 million tons of coal annually. Under the No Action alternative, approximately 2.2 of the 4.5 million tons of Central Pennsylvania coal would continue to arrive by truck, for an average of 262 truck trips per day to the Keystone Plant, each carrying approximately 23 tons per trip. Approximately 2.3 million tons of Pittsburgh Seam coal would arrive annually by rail on 213 100-car trains. The Northern Route would remain as the only viable rail access to the Keystone Plant.

Existing portions of the Northern Route are substandard. Norfolk Southern believes that if the Northern Route is the only rail route available to Norfolk Southern to bring Pittsburgh Seam coal to the Keystone Plant, the proportion of the Keystone Plant coal supply delivered by Norfolk Southern could decrease over time. If this were to occur, the level of delivery of Central Pennsylvania coal by trucks using local roads would increase as no alternative rail lines are in the vicinity of the Keystone Plant.

If the proposed rail line were not built, the environmental impacts associated with the build alternatives would not occur. There would be no need for additional right-of-way, associated impacts on wetlands and watercourses would not occur, and archaeological resources would remain in situ. There would be no changes to local surface drainage. In addition, no new at-grade crossing would be required and, as such, there would be no impact associated with rail operations over a new at-grade crossing to vehicles on local public and private roadways.

Norfolk Southern states that the No Action alternative would not allow it the operational flexibility of having access to a shorter and more efficient route to transport coal to the Keystone Plant. Norfolk Southern believes that the No Action alternative (the continued use of the Northern Route and current proportion of rail and truck transportation) does not satisfy the need for more reliable rail transportation to meet current and future demand by the Keystone Plant for increased rail delivery of coal.

2.2 BUILD ALTERNATIVES

SEA considered three build alternatives for the proposed rail line connection: the Avonmore Route, the Blairsville Route and the Saltsburg Connection (the Proposed Action), which are described below and shown in Figure 2.

2.2.1 Build Alternatives Considered and Dismissed from Detailed Evaluation

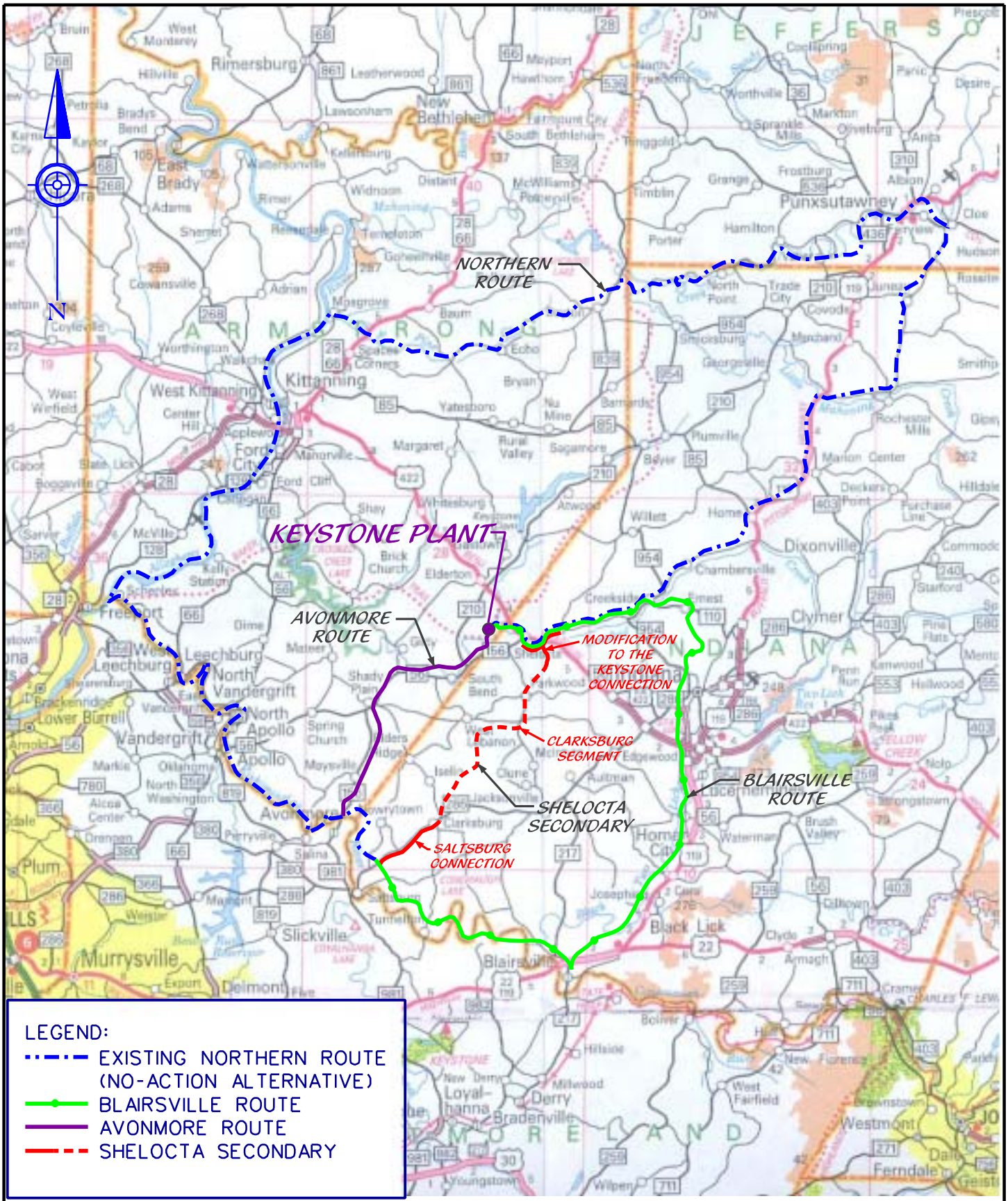
Three build alternatives were identified and developed to assess their potential to meet the project's purpose and need. Two of these alternatives, the Avonmore Route and the Blairsville Route, were eliminated from further consideration, as discussed below.

2.2.1.1 The Avonmore Route

The Avonmore Route would consist of 14 to 16 miles of new rail line that would connect with the Norfolk Southern-operated Conemaugh Line southwest of Saltsburg near Avonmore, running roughly parallel to S.R. 156 northward to the Keystone Plant. Because of major grades along the alignment, the new track would require either the construction of a tunnel or extensive hillside cuts to meet rail operation requirements. To construct the Avonmore Route, Norfolk Southern would need to acquire new right-of-way for its entire length. The approach to the Keystone Plant would be from the east instead of from the west, as exists today, and would require modifications to the recently redesigned rail infrastructure of the Keystone Plant to accommodate a rail approach from this direction. In addition, the dumper operation, car indexer operation, and associated plant track at the Keystone Plant would require extensive modification to accommodate the reverse flow.

The Avonmore Route would not meet the project needs as effectively as the Saltsburg Connection (the Proposed Action) because of the prohibitive cost of constructing a tunnel, performing extensive grading, and acquiring property. The route's overall length also made it undesirable. The Avonmore Route would require greater conversion of property to railroad right-of-way and costly modifications to the newly redesigned infrastructure and operations at the Keystone Plant.

The Avonmore Route would offer some advantages over the existing Northern Route. These advantages were greater carrying capacity, reduced truck trips and beneficial impacts on regional fuel consumption and transportation safety. These advantages, however, do not justify or offset the complexity, expense, and potential adverse environmental impacts associated with constructing and operating this route. Because of the prohibitive cost associated with line construction and operation, private property acquisition, length of the line and environmental impacts associated with extensive grading and tunnel construction, this alternative alignment was rejected.



ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

SOURCE: VISUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

STB	SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	DATE: OCTOBER 2002	FIGURE 2
		SCALE: 1" = 8.8 MILES	

2.2.1.2 The Blairsville Route

The Blairsville Route would consist of restoring and rehabilitating more than 30 miles of inactive rail. The route would utilize Norfolk Southern' existing Blairsville Line from Saltsburg east to Blairsville and north toward Homer City. At Homer City, Norfolk Southern would construct a connection to the inactive CSX Indiana Secondary Line. The connection would be over an abandoned former Penn Central right-of-way. From this connection, the Blairsville Route alternative would then run northwest through the center of the campus of Indiana University and the downtown area of the City of Indiana, PA, to Creekside, PA, over portions of an abandoned Penn Central line and the CSX Indiana Secondary Line. At Creekside, the Blairsville Route would join the existing Northern Route and continue southwest to the Keystone Plant through the existing northern approach to the Keystone Connection and on over the Shelocta Industrial Running Track.

The Blairsville Route would cause significant socioeconomic, cultural resource, recreational, and natural resource impacts. Many of these impacts would be the result of the construction and operation of a new rail line through the center of the campus of Indiana University and through the City of Indian's downtown. Because this track would be at-grade, safety risks to pedestrians could potentially increase. Cultural and recreational resources in the region would also be adversely impacted. The new construction would occur through wetland systems and waterways of a high quality. The Blairsville Route would not meet the overall project needs as effectively as the Saltsburg Connection (the Proposed Action). The overall length, or circuitry, of the route offered little transportation advantage. The route's steeper grades would also result in less efficient fuel use and increased air emissions than the Saltsburg Connection. The Blairsville Route would also require extensive rail line rehabilitation and a major bridge replacement. In addition, a greater amount of property would be required for railroad right-of-way than compared to the Saltsburg Connection.

Operation of the Blairsville Route would meet the project need for a route with greater capacity than the existing Northern Route for rail delivery of coal to the Keystone Plant, but the complexity, expense, and potential environmental impacts of constructing this route are not justified. The environmental impacts identified would be difficult and costly to mitigate. Because of potentially significant socioeconomic, cultural resource, recreational, and natural resource impacts, including the construction and operation of a new rail line through the center of the campus of Indiana University and the City of Indiana's downtown, this line segment was rejected.

2.2.2 Saltsburg Connection - Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The Saltsburg Connection is the Proposed Action for this Environmental Assessment. The Proposed Action consists of the construction and operation of 5.26 miles of new single track through a sparsely populated area between Saltsburg and Clarksburg,

Pennsylvania. The right-of-way for the new track would typically range from 60 feet to 175 feet on either side of the track. The variation in right-of-way width is due to factors such as topography and rail geometry. The track elevation at mean sea level (msl) would be approximately 900 feet at the southern end to 950 feet at the northern end. The new track would connect with the Norfolk Southern-operated Conemaugh Line, near S.R. 286 in Conemaugh Township, at a location north of Saltsburg and just west of the Saltsburg Tunnel.

Two bridges would provide grade-separated crossings over S.R. 3007 and S.R. 286. One new roadway/rail at-grade crossing would be constructed on Bell Road, north of Rose Road. Track construction would require the use of wooded areas and cultivated agricultural fields, and the new segment would pass within 150 feet of three residential structures.

Potential effects to local residents, roadway safety, wetlands, air quality, noise and energy as well as natural and cultural resources were major considerations in SEA's determination of an environmentally preferable alternative.

2.3 SELECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ROUTE

As noted above, SEA considered three alternative locations for the proposed rail line construction. Each build alternative would provide a new rail alternative to access the Keystone Plant. The primary goal for constructing and operating a new rail line would be to develop a more efficient, safe and effective means for rail delivery of coal to the Keystone Plant with the least adverse impact on the environment. After detailed review of the three build alternatives as well as the No Action alternative, SEA determined that based on all the information available to date, the proposed new Saltsburg Connection (the Proposed Action) appears to be the environmentally preferred alternative because construction and operation would result in the least disruption and adverse impact on the environment.

CHAPTER 3
EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the environment that may be affected by the construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection, the Proposed Action. It includes information provided by federal, Commonwealth and local agency contacts and data and information collected in the field.

Existing environmental conditions are described so that the potential environmental impact of the Proposed Action may be assessed. It is the environmental conditions in the vicinity of the Saltsburg Connection project area that are the primary focus of this chapter. Figure 3 shows the general project area for the Saltsburg Connection.

Rail traffic operating over the Saltsburg Connection en route to the Keystone Plant would move over the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment and the modification to the Keystone Connection to approach the Shelocta Industrial Running Track. The existing environment described in this chapter also describes environmental conditions in the vicinities of the Clarksburg Segment and the modification of the Keystone Connection. Where environmental conditions in those adjacent areas differ from conditions in the Saltsburg Connection project area and might be affected by the rail operations of the Saltsburg Connection, they are described in this chapter in a section entitled "Existing Environment - Keystone Project."[10]

3.1 LAND USE

Land use information is an important indicator of where people live and work. This information helps characterize the physical area and the relationship to the land and is beneficial to an understanding of how the proposed changes to land use associated with the construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection, described in the following chapter, might affect the region.

3.1.1 Approach and Methodology

SEA collected land use information from the following federal, state, and local sources:

- U.S. Geological Survey ("USGS") topographic maps
- U.S. Department of Agriculture ("USDA") data

[10] As explained in Chapter 1, the construction activities by Norfolk Southern to rehabilitate the Clarksburg Segment and to modify the alignment of the Keystone Connection are not the Proposed Action before the Board. Environmental impacts associated with those construction activities are, therefore, not addressed in this EA.

- U.S. Census Bureau data
- U.S. Soil Conservation Service
- Indiana County Tourist Bureau data
- Pennsylvania Indiana County Data Book 2001
- "Growth and Revitalization Plan 2000", Indiana County Office of Planning and Development
- Site visits
- Aerial photography

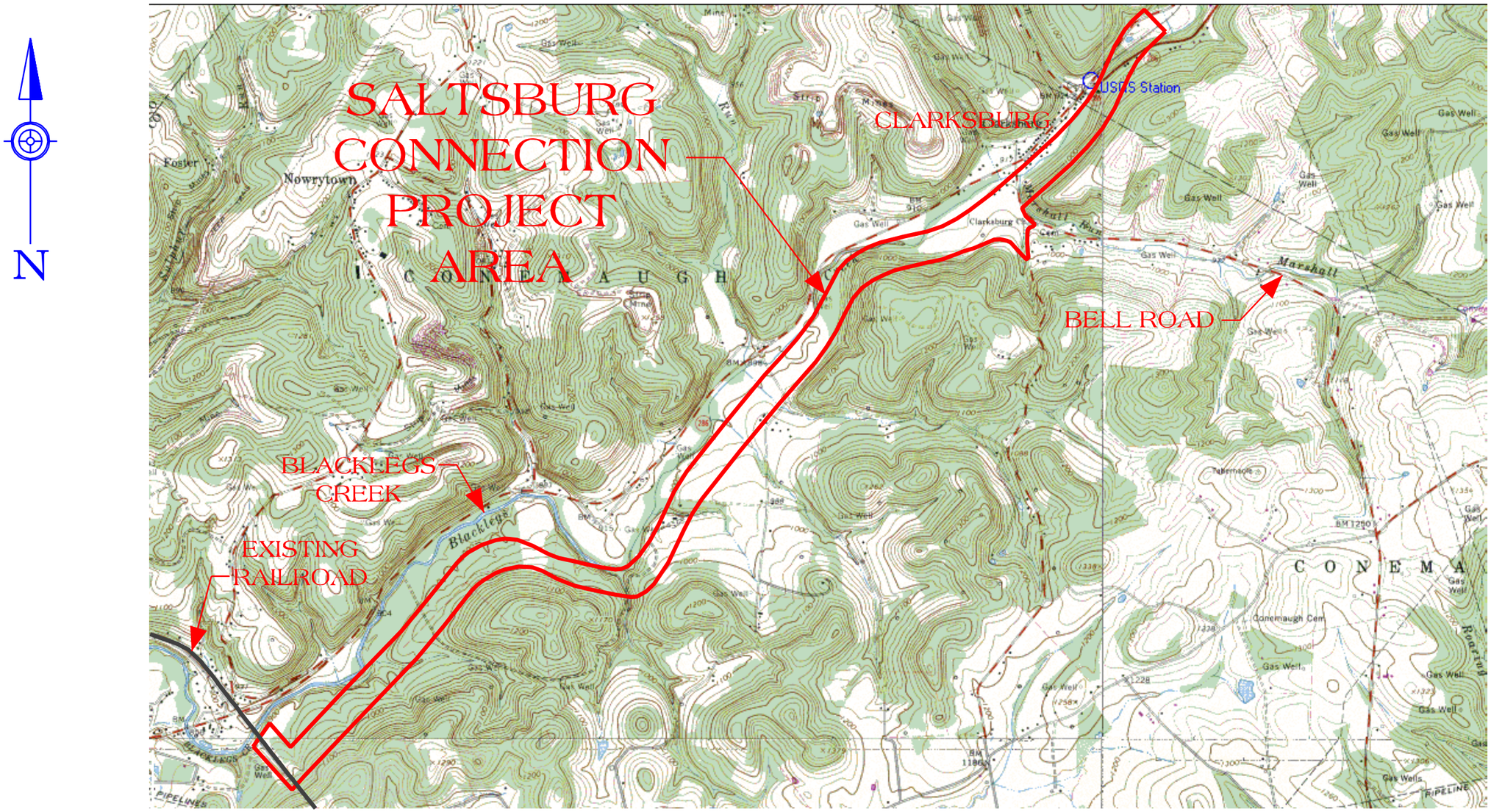
An inventory of the land use within and adjacent to the construction area for the Saltsburg Connection was conducted to identify land uses and structures such as residences, commercial buildings, schools and churches in the Saltsburg Connection project area. Indiana County and Conemaugh and Young Township officials provided information on local planning and zoning requirements to assist SEA in determining if construction of new railroad right-of-way would be consistent with existing land use plans. SEA reviewed the "Growth and Revitalization Plan 2000" for Indiana County. This plan covers Conemaugh Township, Loyalhanna Township, and Saltsburg Borough. It was prepared by the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development and represents the only Comprehensive Plan under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code applicable to these townships in Indiana County. Contacts were also made with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service to identify area soils suitable for agricultural use.

3.1.2 Existing Land Use

All construction and rail operations associated with the Proposed Action would occur entirely within Indiana County. Areas of potential land use change related to construction and operations of the Saltsburg Connection are located in Conemaugh and Young Townships in Indiana County. The U.S. Census Bureau indicates that Indiana County is 829.5 square miles in area, which comprises approximately 1.85 per cent of the total area of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Located in an upland coal-mining region on the Allegheny Plateau of southwestern Pennsylvania, Indiana County, founded in 1803, was initially an agricultural community. It has experienced recurrent economic booms related to the use of its abundant natural resources: salt, coal, natural gas and timber. Three coal-fired electrical generating plants are located within and adjacent to the County. There is no major metropolitan area in Indiana County.

3.1.2.1 Farm and Agricultural Lands

In 1999, farmlands comprised about 232.8 square miles or 28 percent of the total land in Indiana County, with an average farm size of 150 acres. Under Pennsylvania law, local



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF SALTSBURG CONNECTION PROJECT AREA

BASE MAP: AVONMORE,SALTSBURG,MC INTYRE AND BLAIRSVILLE, PA QUADRANGLE

STB	SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	DATE: OCTOBER 2002 SCALE: 1" = 2000'	FIGURE 3

officials may protect farmland from development by purchasing development rights to the lands through Agricultural Conservation Easements and classifying the farmland as an "Agricultural Security Area." Farmland may also be protected from development under the Agricultural Land Preservation Policy by classifying the land as "Primary Agricultural Land" or by local governments through agricultural zoning, thus making the land "subject to effective agricultural zoning" for purposes of Commonwealth agricultural policies. Certain lands in agricultural use may also qualify for preferential tax assessment under the Pennsylvania Act 319 "Clean and Green" program or Act 515. No farmland in the Saltsburg Connection project area is subject to an Agricultural Conservation Easement, classified as either an Agricultural Security Area or Primary Agricultural Land, subject to effective agricultural zoning, or qualified for preferential tax assessment. (See Appendix B, page B2).

Soils particularly suited for agriculture use may be subject to the federal Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 ("FPPA"), 7 U.S.C. Section 4201. Under the FPPA, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture may designate certain soil types as "Prime Farmland." The FPPA also authorizes State Rural Development Committees and local agencies to designate soil types as "Farmland of Statewide Importance" or "Farmland of Local Importance." Those soils within the Saltsburg Connection project area that are classified as Prime Farmland or as Farmland of Statewide Importance are identified in the map associated with the Physiography Section below. No soils within the Saltsburg Connection project area are classified as Farmland of Local Importance.

3.1.2.2 Public Lands

Publicly-owned lands in Indiana County include the 2,981-acre Yellow Creek State Park, located seven miles west of the City of Indiana and featuring a 720-acre lake with swimming along an 800-foot guarded beach. There are 471 acres of Commonwealth-owned land in Indiana County designated as State Forest Lands and approximately 2,250 acres of county parklands and natural areas. There are no Commonwealth parks or forests in Conemaugh or Young Townships. The only federal public land in the Saltsburg Connection project area is the Conemaugh River Lake recreation area administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("ACOE"). The Pennsylvania Game Commission leases 7,000 acres of land around the lake for wildlife management and hunting. Located approximately four miles from the closest point along the proposed Saltsburg Connection, the recreation area offers hunting, fishing, hiking and picnicking opportunities.

3.1.2.3 Land Use Characteristics

Nearly all of the Saltsburg Connection would run through Conemaugh Township (refer to Figure 1), in which the main land uses are wooded, open space, and farming. Only small amounts of land within Conemaugh Township are devoted to residential, industrial,

institutional and commercial uses. Most of Conemaugh Township's residences are spread out along the road network, interspersed with a few crossroads and villages with denser residential development primarily determined by the availability of water and sewer services. Conemaugh Township, with a 2000 population of 2,437, is classified as a Pennsylvania township of the second class because it has a population density of less than 300 persons per square mile. Conemaugh Township has no zoning ordinances. The community of Clarksburg is located in the northern part of Conemaugh Township. This community is characterized by commercial businesses, residential homes, and small retail establishments oriented along S.R. 286.

Approximately 2,000 feet of the Saltsburg Connection at its northernmost point would extend into Young Township. According to Young Township officials, the Township does not maintain land use data. Field surveys of the area in Young Township indicate a rural setting for residents and businesses in proximity to the proposed rail line.

3.1.3 Visual Environment

The visual environment within the vicinity of the Saltsburg Connection is moderate to high in quality. The general landscape consists of rolling terrain covered by woodlands, cultivated fields and shrubby successional vegetation, interspersed with 300-foot forested, sparsely populated mountains. Blacklegs Creek runs along the base of the mountains. The setting is pleasant, but not pristine. Residences dot the landscape and S.R. 286 runs roughly parallel to the north side of Blacklegs Creek. The proposed rail alignment of the Saltsburg Connection would run roughly parallel to the south side of Blacklegs Creek and would be visible only from portions of S.R. 286 and the few developed properties along the route. According to an official of Indiana County, the County Subdivision Ordinance does not apply to the visual resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

3.1.4 Coastal Zone Management Areas

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has two Coastal Zone Management Areas, associated with Lake Erie and the Delaware Estuary. Neither Lake Erie nor the Delaware Estuary areas are located in any portion of Indiana County.

3.2 ECONOMIC SETTING AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The economic setting and demographics of the Saltsburg Connection project area provide indicators of the local and regional economic strength, population trends, and population characteristics. This information helps define the economic setting of the Proposed Action and is beneficial to an understanding of how the proposed construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection rail line would affect the local economy.

3.2.1 Approach and Methodology

SEA collected economic and demographic information from the following federal, state, and local sources:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture ("USDA") data
- U.S. Census Bureau data
- Indiana County Tourist Bureau data
- Pennsylvania Indiana County Data Book 2001
- "Growth and Revitalization Plan 2000", Indiana County Office of Planning and Development
- Site visits

An inventory of the businesses and population within and adjacent to the proposed extended Saltsburg Connection project area was conducted. Indiana County and Conemaugh and Young Township officials provided information on local planning and zoning requirements to assist SEA in determining if construction and operation of new railroad rights-of-way would be consistent with existing and future land use and development plans. SEA reviewed the "Growth and Revitalization Plan 2000" for Indiana County to obtain information on the area economic characteristics. This plan covers Conemaugh Township, Loyalhanna Township, and Saltsburg Borough. It was prepared by the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development and represents the only Comprehensive Plan under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code applicable to portions of Indiana County.

3.2.2 Economic Characteristics

Known as the Christmas Tree Capital of the World, Indiana County is home to growers who currently supply over a million trees to markets nationwide. Historic, cultural and recreational features such as covered bridges, a large Amish settlement, the Ghost Town Trail, Yellow Creek State Park, Buttermilk Falls natural area and four county parks help support tourism in the County.

Based on 1998 U.S. Census economic data, the latest year for which such data are available, forestry, fishing, hunting and agriculture comprise the largest business sector in Indiana County, employing 23,999 people. The next largest business sector in the County is retail trade, which employs 4,574 persons. Mining companies employ 994 persons and truck transportation establishments employ approximately 548 persons. The Keystone Plant, located in Armstrong County near the western boundary of Indiana County, employs approximately 170 persons, making it one of the larger employers in Armstrong County and in the Saltsburg Connection project area. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that in 1999, the latest year for which census data are available, the median household income in Indiana County was $30,233. Persons with income below the poverty level

comprised 17.3 percent of the Indiana County population. The percentage of children in Indiana County living below poverty levels is 18.1 percent. In December 2000, the County unemployment rate was 6.6 percent.

The largest employer in Conemaugh Township is Breeze Clamp Products (formerly Federal Laboratories), which manufactures hose clamps and employs approximately 274 persons. The next largest employer in the Township is Winchester Industries, Inc., which manufactures window products and employs approximately 75 persons. Both businesses are located near Saltsburg and are outside the vicinity of the Saltsburg Connection project area. Other businesses in Conemaugh Township include a convenience store on S.R. 286 between Saltsburg and Clarksburg and a gas station in Clarksburg. Business data for Young Township is not available.

3.2.3 Population

The population of Indiana County nearly doubled between 1900 and 1920 due to the growth of the coal industry. Population growth proceeded at a slow but steady pace until it reached a peak of 92,281 in 1980. As of 2000, the latest year for which data are available, the population of Indiana County had declined to 89,605. The population density of Indiana County is 108 people per square mile, well below the Commonwealth's 273.6 people per square mile average.

There is no major metropolitan area in Indiana County. The largest population center is the county seat, Indiana Borough, located near the geographic center of the County and the home of Indiana University. Indiana Borough had a 1999 population of 14,674. The 1990 Census identifies Indiana County as 79.1 percent rural. The populations of Conemaugh and Young Townships, through which the Saltsburg Connection would run, are classified as 100 percent rural. The 2000 Census population was 2,437 for Conemaugh Township and 1,805 for Young Township.

3.3 GEOLOGY AND CLIMATE

The geology and climate, or physiography, of a region provides a basis for understanding the Proposed Action against the natural conditions of land and weather. The geology and soils of the region are described for the Saltsburg Connection project area. General climate conditions are also described using historic climatic data.

3.3.1 Approach and Methodology

The physical geography is described for an area roughly 60 feet to 175 feet on either side of the proposed track alignment for the length of the Saltsburg Connection. The variation in right-of-way width is due to factors such as topography and rail geometry. This distance corresponds to the proposed right-of-way width. SEA reviewed the following

sources of geology and climate information from agency sources and fieldwork:

- The Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources ("PADEP")
- USDA, including soil survey maps prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA
- Site visits
- Contacts with county and local officials

3.3.2 Geology

The physical geography of the Saltsburg Connection project area includes its landforms (geology), soil, and climate. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is divided into seven physiographic provinces. The Saltsburg Connection project area is located in the Pittsburgh Lower Plateau Section of the Appalachian Plateaus physiographic province of Pennsylvania. (Geyer and Wilshusen, 1982; GeoMap 1980). The Pittsburgh Low Plateau Section consists of a smooth undulating upland surface cut by numerous, narrow, relatively shallow valleys. The uplands are situated on rocks containing the bulk of the significant bituminous coal in Pennsylvania. The landscape is notable for the presence of some operating surface mines, many old stripping areas, and many reclaimed stripping areas. The local topographic relief on the uplands is generally less than 200 feet. Local topographic relief between valley bottoms and upland surfaces may be as much as 600 feet. Valley sides are usually moderately steep except in the upper reaches of streams where the side slopes are fairly gentle. Elevations range from 660 to 1,700 feet above mean sea level. Some of the land surface in the southwestern part of the Pittsburgh Low Plateau Section is very susceptible to landslides.

The Pittsburgh Low Plateau Section covers much of western and southwestern Pennsylvania. It includes all of Greene, Washington, and Armstrong Counties, most of Beaver, Butler, Clarion, Jefferson, Clearfield, Westmoreland, and Indiana Counties, and parts of Lawrence, Venango, Elk, Cambria, and Fayette Counties (PA Geologic Survey).

The area of the proposed Saltsburg Connection from west of the Saltsburg Tunnel to approximately Bell Road is contained within the Casselman geologic formation. The remaining length of the Saltsburg Connection extending beyond Bell Road is contained within the Glenshaw geologic formation. Both the Casselman and Glenshaw formations are characterized by rolling to narrow ridges, with hills of medium relief with stable moderate to steep natural slopes, except where beds of red shale, red sandstone, or red siltstone (red beds) occur. Cut-slope stability is good to fair in the Casselman formation, poor to fair for red beds, and good for sandstone in the Glenshaw formation. Additionally, both formations have characteristics of claystone and shale disintegration under resistant sandstone and siltstone beds, which can result in rockfalls, slumps, and landslides.

The Casselman formation consists of alternating layers of shale, siltstone, sandstone, red beds, thin impure limestone, and thin non-persistent coal. It has red beds that are associated with landslides and the formation's base is at the top of the Ames limestone. The Glenshaw formation consists of alternating layers of shale, sandstone, red beds, and thin limestone and coal, including several marine limestone or shale horizons. It has red beds that are involved in landslides, and this formation's base is at the top of the Upper Freeport coal (Geyer and Wilshusen, 1982; GeoMap, 1980).

3.3.3 Soils

Two major soil associations were identified for the Saltsburg Connection project area, based on soil survey maps maintained by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. Between Saltsburg and Clarksburg, the project alignment is primarily within the Gilpin-Weikert-Ernest soil association. The southernmost limits of the proposed Saltsburg Connection project area are in the Monongahela-Allegheny-Pope-Philo soil association. This soil association consists of meandering streams, smooth floodplains, and dissected terraces. Monongahela soils make up about 40 percent of this association, and Allegheny, Pope, Philo, along with other minor soils, each make up about 15 percent. Further north, the Gilpin-Weikert-Ernest soil association is characterized by rolling hills that have narrow to broad ridge tops, and narrow stream-cut valleys that range from gently sloping to steep sides. Gilpin and Weikert soils each make up about 40 percent of this association. Ernest soils, together with other minor soils, make up the remaining portion.

Soil associations are further classified by soil series. Twelve soil series were identified within the Saltsburg Connection project area (USDA, 1991). A list of the Prime Farmland and Statewide Important Soils referred to in the Land Use section of this report are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 PRIME FARMLAND AND STATE IMPORTANT SOILS IN THE SALTSBURG CONNECTION PROJECT AREA

Prime Farmland	State Important Soils
Ernest silt loam soils (ErC2)	Ernest silt loam soils (ErA2 and ErB2)
Monongahela silt loam (MoC2)	Monongahela silt loam (MoB2 and MoC2)
Upshur-Gilpin silty loam soils (UgB2)	Upshur-Gilpin silty loam soils (UgC2)
Wharton silt loam soils (WrA)	
Vandergrift silt loam soil (VaB2)	

3.3.4 Climate

Indiana County experiences warm summers and cold winters. The monthly average temperature ranges from 29° F in January to 71° F in July. The temperatures, on average, are slightly higher and rainfall is somewhat less in the valleys than at higher elevations. Precipitation is adequate and normally well distributed, with annual average precipitation of approximately 48 inches in the region. About 60 percent of the annual precipitation occur from April through September. Snowfalls are frequent and sometimes heavy from mid-November to mid-March. Annual snowfall averages approximately 80 inches at higher elevations in the southern portion of Indiana County, and less than 40 inches in the western parts (USDA, 1991).

3.4 WATER RESOURCES

Water availability, quality and uses are discussed in this section for the Saltsburg Connection project area. Water resource information and data are provided for water quality, wetlands, floodplains, and recreational waters.

3.4.1 Approach and Methodology

SEA identified the types and extent of groundwater and surface water resources, including wetlands and floodplains, using a variety of sources. Water resources were identified and delineated where construction activities are proposed in the Saltsburg Connection project area. The right-of-way for the Saltsburg Connection ranges from 60 to 175 feet wide depending upon rail embankment and drainage requirements, but the right-of-way corridor is on average about 120 feet wide. SEA obtained groundwater and surface water information from the following federal, Commonwealth and local sources and from field work conducted in the Saltsburg Connection project area:

- USGS topographic maps
- National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps
- EPA Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance maps
- USDA, including Natural Resources Conservation Service soil survey maps
- PADEP and its predecessor agency, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (PADEP)
- Pennsylvania Code
- Indiana County
- Blackleggs (sic) Creek Watershed Association
- Site surveys
- Wetlands Identification and Delineation Report

3.4.2 Groundwater

From Saltsburg to approximately Bell Road, the proposed Saltsburg Connection is situated over the Casselman Formation aquifer. The remainder of the Saltsburg Connection is situated over the Glenshaw Formation aquifer. Well yields in both aquifers are highly variable depending on local effective porosity. Regional mining, including huge cuts for rail, may disrupt groundwater occurrence and degrade water quality. In these areas of mining, the geology is characterized as fractured coal-bearing strata and is high in iron and sulfates. Groundwater in the Casselman and Glenshaw Formations tends to be hard, and iron and manganese have been reported at concentrations greater than EPA secondary maximum contaminant levels of 0.3 mg/l and 0.05 mg/l, respectively. (Geyer and Wilshusen, 1982; GeoMap, 1980; USGS, 1995).

The Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County currently provides public water services to 50 residences towards the lower end of Conemaugh Township. The Nowrytown Water Association has prepared a feasibility study to provide public water service to Clarksburg. In addition, the Conemaugh Township Municipal Authority has prepared a separate feasibility study to provide sewer services to the southern limits of Conemaugh Township adjacent to S.R. 0286. The remaining population within the area utilizes private wells for its drinking water and household uses. (Maguire and Cavalier, 2000).

3.4.3 Surface Water

With the exception of its end points, the proposed Saltsburg Connection would run parallel to Blacklegs Creek, a major waterway of the Loyalhanna Creek watershed of the Lower Allegheny Sub-basin. The Loyalhanna Creek Watershed, also known as Watershed 18C, has a total drainage area of 370 square miles. Blacklegs Creek, Marshall Run, and unnamed tributaries of Blacklegs Creek and Marshall Run transect the alignment of the proposed Saltsburg Connection. Blacklegs Creek flows southwest to merge with the Conemaugh River, which becomes the Kiskiminetas River just before it drains into the Allegheny River.

PADEP has designated uses (e.g., recreation, fisheries and public water supply) that individual bodies of water throughout the Commonwealth can support. PADEP has designated Blacklegs Creek and Marshall Run as capable of supporting Cold Water Fisheries use, i.e., maintenance or propagation, or both, of fish species, including the salmon/trout family, and additional flora and fauna indigenous to a cold water habitat. PADEP has identified segments of Blacklegs Creek, including the length of Blacklegs Creek from Saltsburg to Clarksburg and beyond, as impaired for Cold Water Fisheries use due to metals and pH (acidity) from acid mine drainage.

The Blackleggs Creek Watershed Association received grant monies from the Western

Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Growing Greener Grant program, and the Western Pennsylvania Watershed Protection Program to restore Blacklegs Creek. The Blackleggs Creek Watershed Association used the grant monies to construct a mine drainage treatment system designed to remove iron from wastewater discharge from the Kolb mine into Blacklegs Creek near its headwaters. The treatment system began operation May 15, 2001. The group also received additional funding to be applied for restoration of Big Run, a major tributary to Blacklegs Creek, and is working toward restoring the remainder of Blacklegs Creek.

3.4.4 Wetlands and Floodplains

Jurisdictional waters, or "waters of the U.S.," are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) as "coastal and inland waters, lakes, rivers, and streams that are navigable waters of the United States, including their adjacent wetlands" and "tributaries to navigable waters of the United States, including adjacent wetlands." (Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual [Environmental Laboratory, 1987]). ACOE and PADEP regulate disturbances to these areas through the joint federal/state permitting process and require mitigation for unavoidable losses to ensure that impacts to these areas are de minimis.

The NWI map produced by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) identifies two forested wetlands and Blacklegs Creek within the Saltsburg Connection area. The forested wetlands are classified by USFWS as palustrine (marshy) forested wetlands, and Blacklegs Creek is classified as a riverine upper perennial, open water, intermittently exposed/permanent wetland. Immediately adjacent to the Saltsburg Connection project area, the NWI identifies five palustrine forested, broad-leaved deciduous, temporary wetlands; two palustrine forested and scrub/shrub, broad-leaved deciduous, temporary wetlands; one palustrine emergent, saturated/semi-permanent/ seasonal wetland; and one palustrine open water, intermittently exposed/permanent wetland. Blacklegs Creek is classified by USFWS as riverine upper perennial, open water, intermittently exposed/permanent system.

A Wetlands Identification and Delineation Report was prepared using appropriate ACOE methodologies to identify wetlands and "waters of the U.S." that might not be included on the NWI map in the area where construction of the Saltsburg Connection would occur. The Wetlands Identification and Delineation Report indicates that the Saltsburg Connection project area contains 24.73 acres of wetlands and waterways at 79 locations under the jurisdiction of ACOE and PADEP. Figure 4 presents the wetlands and waterways locations. The riverine systems are associated with Blacklegs Creek and Marshall Run and their respective unnamed tributaries. The palustrine wetlands are adjacent to and associated with the riverine systems and seeps, or are associated with low-lying areas that collect surface and groundwater runoff.

Additionally, FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) indicate that the proposed construction areas are primarily located outside of the 500-year floodplains, with small portions located within 100-year floodplain (FEMA 1986 and 1990). (See Figure 5.)

3.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

SEA reviewed information and data related to the biological resources of the Saltsburg Connection project area and provides information about the existing environment in this section. Biological resources include the fauna and flora of the area and the habitats in which they occur.

3.5.1 Approach and Methodology

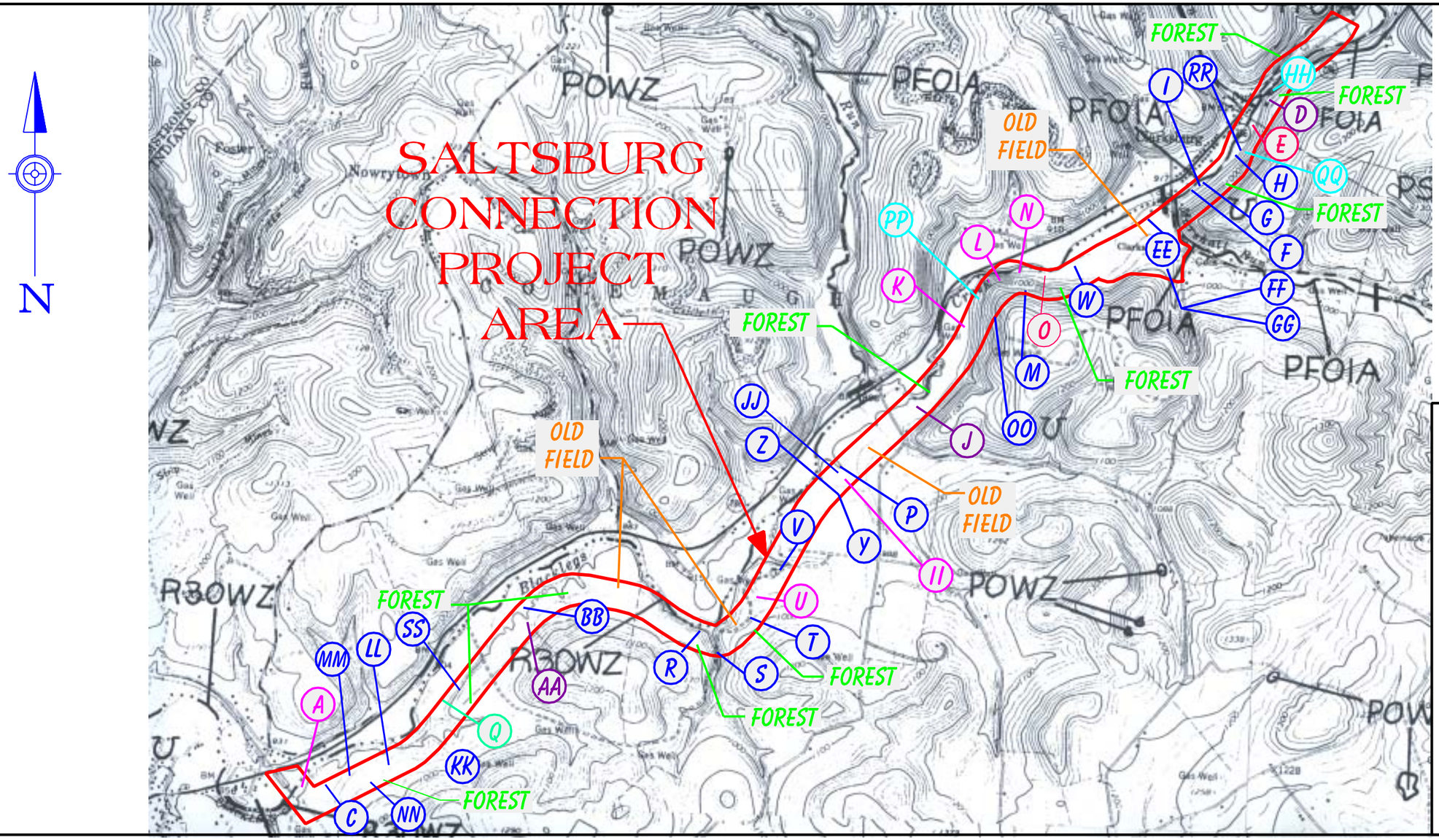
SEA collected information regarding biological resources potentially occurring at or in the immediate vicinity of the Saltsburg Connection from the following sources:

- PADEP
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PAFBC)
- Pennsylvania Game Commission (PAGC)
- Pennsylvania Biological Survey
- USGS Habitat Suitability Index
- USFWS
- BlackleggsTrout Co-operative
- Site visits

Site visits were conducted in the vicinity of the Saltsburg Connection project area to identify biological resources that are part of the existing environment. Wildlife and plant populations were identified within the Saltsburg Connection project area.

3.5.2 Wildlife

Field investigation and review of aerial photographs in Indiana County identified several wildlife habitat types including forests, open fields, wetlands, and surface water that are used by a variety of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species (see Figure 5). Birds identified by the Pennsylvania Biological Survey and the USGS Habitat Suitability Index include the song sparrow (Melospiza melodia), mourning dove (Zenaida macroura), blue jay (Cyanocitta cristata), American crow (Corvus brachyrhynchos), turkey vulture (Cathartes aura), and red-tailed hawk (Buteo jamaicensis). Mammals include shorttail shrew (Blarina brevicauda), least shrew (Cryptotis parva), meadow vole (Microtus pennsylvanicus), woodland vole (Microtus pinetorum), house mouse (Mus musculus), white footed mouse (Peromyscus leucopus), eastern cottontail rabbit (Sylvilagus floridanus), woodchuck (Marmota monax), raccoon (Procyon lotor), opossum (Didelphis virginiana), striped skunk (Mephitis mephitis), and white tailed deer (Odorcoileus virginianus).

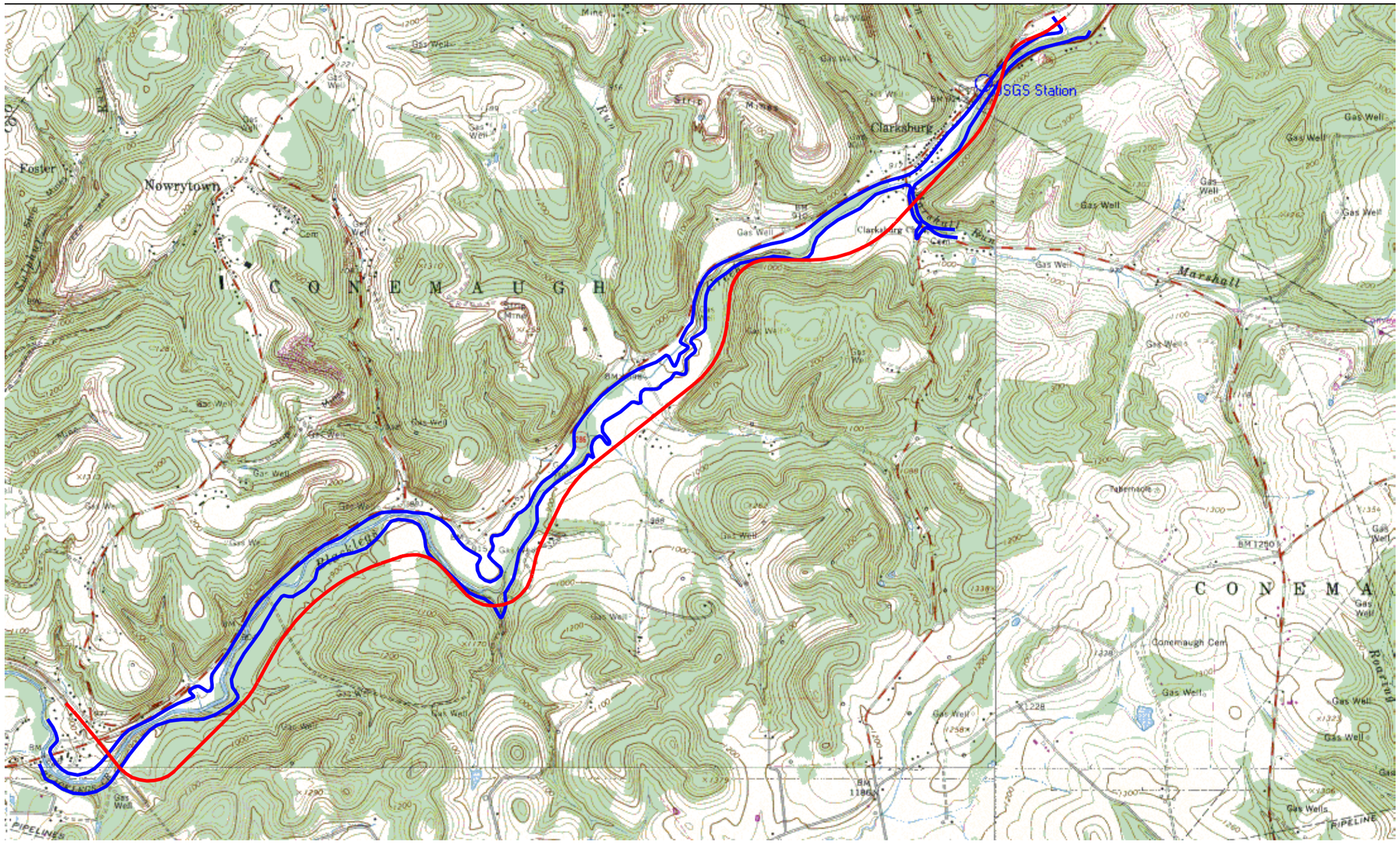


WETLANDS AND HABITATS

SALTSBURG CONNECTION

BASE MAP: NATIONAL INVENTORY MAP AVONMORE, MC INTYRE, & SALTSBURG, PA

STB	SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	DATE: OCTOBER 2002 SCALE: 1" = 2000'	FIGURE 4



100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS

SALTSBURG CONNECTION

BASE MAP: AVONMORE,SALTSBURG,MC INTYRE AND BLAIRSVILLE, PA QUADRANGLE

STB	SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	LEGEND: 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN PROPOSED RAIL ALIGNMENT	DATE: OCTOBER 2002 SCALE: 1"=2000'	FIGURE 5

The streams typically provide habitat for aquatic species such as muskrat (Ondatra zibethicus), brown trout (Salmo trutta), bluegill sunfish (Lepomis macrochirus), creek chubs (Semotilus atromaculatus), and mummichog (Fundulus heteroclitus). PAFBC stocks Blacklegs Creek from its headwaters to Marshall Run each year with approximately 3,000 brook trout (Salvelinus fontinalis) and brown trout. The Blackleggs (sic) Trout Co-operative stocks the same stretch of Blacklegs Creek with approximately 12,000 brook trout and rainbow trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss) each year.

The Saltsburg Connection would follow the floodplain of Blacklegs Creek between Clarksburg and Saltsburg. A significant portion of the Saltsburg Connection project area has been previously disturbed by farming, tree harvesting, and general development. Terrestrial wildlife associated with upland forest and open fields occupies a majority of the Saltsburg Connection project area.

3.5.3 Vegetation

Several terrestrial vegetative communities are present in the Saltsburg Connection project Area, including palustrine wetlands (emergent, scrub-shrub, and forested), open fields, and forests. Field observations of vegetation in the area have included the following vegetation typical of wetlands: New York ironweed *(Vernonia noveboracensis)*, sensitive fern *(Onoclea sensibilis)*, soft rush (Juncus effuses), reed canary grass *(Phalaris arundinacea)*, purple-leafed willow herb *(Epilobium coloratum)*, purple loosestrife *(Lythrum salicaria)*, skunk cabbage *(Symplocarpus foetidus)*, silky dogwood *(Cornus amomum)*, red-osier dogwood *(Cornus sericea)*, ninebark *(Physocarpus opulifolius)*, black willow *(Salix nigra)*, red maple *(Acer rubrum)*, American elm *(Ulmus americana)*, and boxelder *(Acer negundo)*.

Field observations have also identified the following vegetation in the open field portions of the Saltsburg Connection project area: yarrow *(Achillea millefolium)*, common milkweed *(Asclepias syriaca)*, Canada thistle *(Cirsium arvense)*, Queen Anne's lace *(Daucas carota)*, red clover *(Trifolium pratense)*, and rough-stemmed goldenrod *(Solidago rugosa)*.

In forested portions of the Saltsburg Connection project area, the following vegetation has been identified during field observations: red maple *(A. rubrum)*, hawthorn *(Crataegus sp.)*, black cherry *(Prunus serotina)*, Norway maple *(Acer platanoides)*, and sugar maple *(Acer saccharum)*. Understory woody vegetation observed includes spice bush *(Lindera benzion)*, multiflora rose *(Rosa multiflora)*, poison ivy *(Toxicodendron radicans)*, ironwood *(Carpinus caroliniana)*, and blackberry *(Rubus allegheniensis)*.

3.5.4 Threatened and Endangered Species

Based on consultations with PADEP, via the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory

(which includes information from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy), PAFBC, PAGC, and USFWS, no Federal or state listed threatened and endangered species or related critical habitat exist within the Saltsburg Connection project area (See Appendix B, Document B4).

3.6 ENERGY

An understanding of the energy resources related to the Proposed Action assists in assessing the potential impacts to energy efficiencies. Existing energy use in the Saltsburg Connection project area is discussed in this section.

3.6.1 Approach and Methodology

The Proposed Action could affect the efficiency of coal transport and potentially result in the diversion of coal from truck transport to rail transport. SEA evaluated the potential changes in coal transport to determine their effect on potential energy use. Keystone Plant representatives provided information regarding the amount of coal delivered to the plant. Norfolk Southern provided information for locomotive power to transport coal to the Keystone Plant.

3.6.2 Energy Information

The Keystone Plant currently receives approximately 2.2 million tons per year of Central Pennsylvania coal by truck and approximately 2.3 million tons of Pittsburgh Seam coal delivered by rail by Norfolk Southern. The proposed Saltsburg Connection would shorten the route for delivering coal by rail and potentially result in the diversion of coal from truck transport to rail.

Existing Rail Operations. Norfolk Southern currently transports coal to the Keystone Plant in 100-car unit trains moved by four 6-axle steerable-truck diesel locomotives (SD80 MAC 5,000 horsepower locomotives), hauling approximately 10,800 tons of coal per train. Each ton of coal, therefore, requires 1.85 horsepower to transport. Annual transport of 2.3 million tons of coal on the Northern Route requires approximately 14,500 gallons of diesel fuel per year.

Power Generation. The Keystone Plant currently receives approximately 2.2 million tons per year of Central Pennsylvania coal and approximately 2.3 million tons of Pittsburgh Seam coal. Central Pennsylvania coal has a British Thermal Unit (BTU) value of 12,300. The BTU value of Pittsburgh Seam coal is 13,000 to 13,100.

3.7 HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES AND TRANSPORT OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The Board procedures for implementing environmental laws include provisions for assessing hazardous waste transport and hazardous waste sites. No hazardous materials would be transported as part of the Proposed Action. This section discusses the presence of hazardous waste sites in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

3.7.1 Approach and Methodology

A Phase I and a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) were conducted to identify potential hazardous substances or petroleum products in the Saltsburg Connection project area where construction, operation, or maintenance of the Saltsburg Connection could potentially encroach on or near hazardous waste sites. The Phase I assessment consisted of document and record searches and field investigations for the Proposed Action region. The Phase II assessment focused on specific sites in the Saltsburg Connection project area. Norfolk Southern conducted the ESA and submitted the report as part of its Preliminary Draft EA for the project. SEA's third-party contractor reviewed the data results. The ESAs were performed in accordance with procedures and guidelines established by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), an independent organization dedicated to developing voluntary consensus standards for industries worldwide. The ASTM standard practices for ESAs are considered the industry norm and are utilized by federal and state agencies. The ESAs investigated the right-of-way on either side of the proposed new track.

3.7.2 Hazardous Waste Information

Approximately 26 federal and Commonwealth databases that identify hazardous waste sites were reviewed to determine if any known and listed sites existed in areas of proposed construction for the Saltsburg Connection. Additionally, site visits in the Saltsburg Connection project area noted any obvious indications of potential hazardous waste sites within the construction areas.

The Phase I ESA for the Saltsburg Connection was developed in accordance with the accepted protocols set forth in ASTM Practice E 1527-97, “Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process.” The Phase I ESA includes:

- A search of federal and Commonwealth hazardous waste site databases
- Site reconnaissance to observe surface conditions and current activities and visually inventory potential contamination sources
- Interviews with public officials
- Review of public records, historic aerial photographs and topographic

maps
- Evaluation and analysis of the gathered data

The Phase I ESA concluded that a further assessment of potential environmental conditions was warranted for one site within the Saltsburg Connection project area, the former Federal Laboratories warehouse within the proposed alignment of the Saltsburg Connection (potential soil impact).

A Phase II ESA was conducted at the former Federal Laboratories warehouse in accordance with the ASTM Practice E 1527-97. The Phase II ESA included the following field activities and laboratory analysis to ascertain the extent of contamination:

- Soil boring samples obtained at the Federal Laboratories site based on field screening for organic vapors and an evaluation of physical indicators
- Chemical analysis of the media sample collected at the site by a certified laboratory
- Assessment of the laboratory analysis

The Phase II ESA concluded that the soil samples from the Federal Laboratories site did not exceed applicable PADEP criteria and that soils and sediments at the site required no special handling or worker protection measures.

3.8 AIR QUALITY

The Surface Transportation Board's rules require consideration of air quality impacts as part of the environmental documentation. These rules establish thresholds that are used to indicate potential project impacts. The air quality thresholds established by the Surface Transportation Board are based on an increase of 8 trains per day and a 100 percent increase in gross ton miles. The Proposed Action would not exceed the Board's air quality thresholds. SEA, however, considered air quality resources as part of the environmental analysis. This section provides baseline air quality conditions for the Saltsburg Connection project area.

3.8.1 Approach and Methodology

SEA identified air quality conditions in Indiana County. SEA reviewed existing air quality data and coordinated with local and State regulatory agencies to identify air quality concerns in the region. Additional sources for information included EPA, PADEP, and field observations.

3.8.2 Air Quality Information

EPA has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) under the Clean

Air Act for pollutants of concern. NAAQS are established for: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, lead, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. Regions within a state are designated as either "attainment" or "nonattainment" areas for each NAAQS pollutant. If emissions of a particular air pollutant exceed the established NAAQS, the region is designated as a nonattainment area for that air pollutant. Areas of nonattainment are typically part of a larger Air Quality Control Region that monitors air quality and sources of pollution. Likewise, if emissions do not exceed the established NAAQS, the region is designated as an attainment area for the specific air pollutant. According to EPA, all of Indiana County is an attainment area for each NAAQS pollutant. Indiana County is not, therefore, within a designated Air Quality Control Region for any air pollutant. This means that air quality within the Saltsburg Connection project area is considered better than the national standards established by EPA. Current sources of emissions in Indiana County include vehicles, light industries, locomotives, electric generating plants, a tire manufacturing plant and natural gas transmission operations. Current sources of emissions in or near the Saltsburg Connection project area include vehicles, light industries, locomotives, the Keystone Plant and mining operations.

3.9 NOISE

The Surface Transportation Board's rules require the consideration of noise impacts as part of the environmental documentation. These rules establish thresholds that are used to indicate potential project impacts. The noise thresholds established by the Surface Transportation Board are based on an increase of 8 trains per day and a 100 percent increase in gross ton miles. The proposed project would not exceed the Board's noise thresholds.

3.9.1 Approach and Methodology

SEA conducted research to determine the existing noise environment in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

3.9.2 Existing Noise Environment

The existing environment for the Saltsburg Connection project area is undeveloped wooded areas and cultivated agricultural fields, with the addition of residential properties in Conemaugh Township. SEA observed that steady automobile traffic on S.R. 286 creates relatively constant low-level ambient noise, frequently punctuated by higher levels of noise created by diesel engines and gear shifting of coal trucks traveling on S.R. 286 to and from the Keystone Plant.

3.10 CULTURAL RESOURCES

SEA conducted a thorough investigation of the archaeological and historic resources

within the Saltsburg Connection project area. Norfolk Southern tested the Saltsburg Connection project area for the presence of archaeological artifacts and surveyed area buildings (homes and commercial buildings, occupied and empty) for the purpose of documenting structures with historic features. Norfolk Southern provided the findings to SEA and to the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) in two reports. The historic survey report is titled the "Intensive-Level Historic Architectural Survey for the Proposed Saltsburg to Clarksburg Rail Line, and Conemaugh and Young Townships, Indiana County, Pennsylvania" dated February 2002. The archaeological report is titled "Phase I/II Archaeological Investigations for the Proposed Norfolk Southern Railway Company's Saltsburg to Clarksburg Rail Line, Armstrong Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania." SEA is coordinating its review with the PHMC in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA.

3.10.1 Approach and Methodology

Information on cultural resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area (i.e., archaeological and historic architectural resources) was obtained from the following literature and fieldwork:

- Background literature research into primary and secondary resources
- Interviews with knowledgeable local residents
- Site-specific surveys and observations
- Field surveys following the procedures adopted by the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission.

The complete cultural resource survey reports, including references and figures, are part of the public record of this Proposed Action, and are on file with the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission. Correspondence with the agency is included in Appendix B, Documents B3 and B5.

3.10.2 Pre-Historic Period

The following description of the pre-historic period is intended to provide an overview of cultural activities in the region prior to settlement by Europeans. This information assists in the determination of cultural assets that might exist in the Saltsburg Connection project area. The first conclusive evidence for human habitation in Pennsylvania dates to the Paleoindian period (circa 10,000 - 8000 BC). Most archaeological sites relating to this broad-based settlement-subsistence system represent small occupations of brief duration that appear as small lithic scatters with low archaeological profiles. During the Archaic Period (circa 8000 to 1000 BC), use of landscapes and resources in the Ohio River Basin intensified, with complex settlement systems centered on dense riverside shell middens and the early domestication of plants. The appearance of ceramic vessels, mound building, the

continuation of hunter-gathering activities, and the cultivation of a suite of native domesticated plants characterize the Woodland Period (1000 BC. - AD 1000) in the region. In the Late Prehistoric and Protohistoric Periods (circa AD 900 - 1690), the Monongahela, other Upper Ohio cultures were gradually replaced by migrant Iroquois. Euroamerican traders and explorers forest entered the area in the late 17th century. In the early 18th century, semi-permanent European trade settlements developed along the region's major rivers, the Monongahela disappeared and some refugee Delaware settled in the area. By the end of the 18th century, the competing interests of English and French traders and settlers led to the end of substantial Native-American occupation of western Pennsylvania.

3.10.3 Historic Period

The first recorded non-native settler of Indiana County arrived in 1764 or 1765. Young and Armstrong Townships were formed circa 1785, with Conemaugh Township and Indian County created around 1803. The population of Indiana County increased rapidly - from 6,214 to 33,687 - between 1810 and 1860. Throughout much of the 19th century, agriculture dominated Indiana County, with habitations few in number and some small-scale surface coal extraction. The likely predecessor to S.R. 286 was first mapped in 1826. By 1851, a coach line ran twice a week through Clarksburg and Saltsburg. In spite of the construction of toll roads and the development of a network of roads between principal towns, Indiana County's roads remained rough until the major building and improvement programs of the early 20th century.

From 1812 to 1869, the principal industrial activity in the southern part of Indiana County was the mining, processing and transshipment of salt, a craze attracting settlers, entrepreneurs and capital to the "Great Conemaugh Salt Works" near the aptly named Saltsburg. Coal mining increased during this time to provide fuel for salt processing, and other recorded industries include whiskey distilleries, grist mills and saw mills. Transportation routes to the town included the Conemaugh and Kiskiminetas Rivers, Loyalhanna Creek, the road to Indiana Borough and the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal, which ran to Pittsburgh. The canal closed shortly after the Pennsylvania Railroad reached Saltsburg in 1864, though some associated resources still survive.

The salt industry began to decline by 1858, but demand for coal for use as fuel, in gasification and in cooking soared in the 1880s. Coals mines opening in the vicinity of Clarksburg ushered in an era of prosperity that lasted nearly three decades. The Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad arrived in Clarksburg about 1904. The line connected Clarksburg to the company coal town of Iselin a few miles to the northwest and continued on to the mainline Creekside connection just east of Shelocta. Travelers could reach Saltsburg from Clarksburg by automobile on a macadamized road. By 1934, however, the Iselin mines closed, railroad service to Clarksburg and Shelocta ceased, and Clarksburg

reverted to a small rural town. As noted above, coal trains still run through Shelocta, now on a spur that runs to the Keystone Plant.

3.10.4 Saltsburg Connection Project Area Resources

The PHMC records show no properties or resources currently listed on the National Register within the Saltsburg Connection project area. The National Register is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation administered at the federal level by the National Park Service and at the state level by each respective state.

A historic architectural survey of the Saltsburg Connection project area identified one property, the Marshall Family House, which the PHMC has preliminarily determined to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register. Located in Clarksburg south of the junction of S.R. 3007 and S.R. 286, the Marshall Family House is currently part of a larger parcel known as Evergreen Estates that has most recently been used for horse breeding and training. The Marshall Family House was built about 1790. The house is a large, Georgia-style stone structure, and is likely historically significant for its role in exploration and settlement of the area and for its well-preserved period architecture. Figure 6 identifies the location of the National Register-eligible Marshall Family House.

An archaeological study of the property proposed for construction or right-of-way use along the Saltsburg Connection determined the existence of and investigated three prehistoric sites that had previously been recorded as well as one prehistoric site that had not been recorded previously. In addition, the archaeological study revealed the existence of and investigated four historic sites that had not been recorded previously. Three of those historic sites were determined during field investigation to have been disturbed and to lack historic integrity. The fourth historic site, known as the Reed Site or the Cribb Site (Reed/Cribb Site), was determined to date to the mid-19th century. Further investigation of three of the prehistoric sites and the historic Reed/Cribb Site and determination of eligibility for listing on the National Register are being coordinated with the PHMC, the State Historic Preservation Officer for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

3.11 RECREATION

SEA and Norfolk Southern identified recreational resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area or in greater Indiana County. These resources represent important investments by the people and communities of the region. The inventory of recreation resources is needed to determine the effect, if any, the proposed rail line would have on recreation accessibility, uses, and growth.

MARSHALL FAMILY HOUSE (APPROXIMATE LOCATION)

BASE MAP VISUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

STB	SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	DATE: OCTOBER 2002	FIGURE 6
		SCALE: 1" = 2.94 MILES	

3.11.1 Approach and Methodology

SEA reviewed information regarding recreation resources and uses obtained from the following sources:

- Growth and Revitalization Plan 2000 prepared for Conemaugh Township, Loyalhanna Township, Saltsburg Borough and the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development
- Indiana County Tourist Bureau
- Blackleggs Trout Co-operative
- Pennsylvania Indiana County Data Book 2001

3.11.2 Public Use

There are 471 acres of Commonwealth-owned land in Indiana County designated as State Forest Lands and approximately 2,250 acres of county parklands and natural areas. Publicly owned lands in Indiana County include the 2,981-acre Yellow Creek State Park, located twelve miles east of the City of Indiana and approximately 20 miles from the proposed route. The park features a 720-acre lake with swimming along an 800-foot guarded beach.

There are no Commonwealth parks or forests in Conemaugh or Young Townships. The only federal public land in the townships is the Conemaugh River Lake recreation area administered by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Pennsylvania Game Commission leases 7,000 acres of land around the lake for wildlife management and hunting. Located approximately four miles from the closest point along the proposed Saltsburg Connection, the recreation area offers hunting, fishing, hiking and picnicking opportunities. The Junior-Senior High School in Conemaugh Township opens its ball fields, play equipment and outdoor swimming pool to public recreational use. The proposed route is approximately one-mile from this site.

Hunting, trapping and fishing are recreational activities in the local townships. Blacklegs Creek, which runs parallel to the Saltsburg Connection, is used for trout fishing and trapping. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boating Commission stocks Blacklegs Creek from its headwaters to Marshall Run each year with approximately 3,000 brook trout and brown trout. The Blackleggs Trout Co-operative stocks the same stretch of Blacklegs Creek with approximately 12,000 brook trout and rainbow trout each year. Marshall Run is unsuitable for trout fishing.

None of the property through which the Saltsburg Connection would operate is publicly owned, and thus no public recreational land use would be affected.

3.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

SEA prepares environmental documents following the guidance presented in Executive Order 12898 - "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." This Executive Order directs federal agencies to analyze the environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income communities. This section identifies potential environmental justice populations in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

3.12.1 Approach and Methodology

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines Environmental Justice as the "fair treatment for people of all races, cultures, and incomes, regarding the development of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." Federal Agencies are responsible for identifying and addressing the significant and adverse effects that have a high and disproportionate impact on minority and low-income communities. Agencies must ensure their actions:

- Do not discriminate based on race, color, or origin.
- Identify and avoid discrimination and avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority populations and low-income populations.
- Provide opportunities for input from the community.

The United States Department of Transportation (DOT) established procedures for complying with Executive Order 12898 in the February 3, 1997, DOT Order "Department of Transportation Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." Although the STB is an independent regulatory agency housed in the DOT, it is not bound by the DOT Orders. However, STB considers environmental justice to be in the public interest and utilizes Executive Order 12898, the DOT Order, CEQ regulations, and guidance issued by EPA in examining environmental justice issues related to its actions.

The CEQ guidance explains that a minority or low-income population may be present if the minority or low-income population percentage of the affected area is "meaningfully greater" than the minority or low-income population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis. SEA uses the term "meaningfully greater" to be greater than 50 percent or more than 10 percent above the average. Since the Proposed Action lies entirely within Indiana County, the appropriate geographical unit for an analysis of the potential for environmental justice impacts associated with the Saltsburg Connection is Indiana County. Therefore, in order to determine whether the Saltsburg Connection would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on a minority or low-income population, data was first gathered comparing the populations in communities adjacent to the Saltsburg Connection project area with the population of

Indiana County as a whole.

Information regarding minority and low-income populations in the relevant census blocks of Conemaugh and Young Townships was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and compared with the criteria for establishing environmental justice communities contained in the federal law and policies described below.

3.12.2 Saltsburg Connection Project Area Information

The U.S. Census Bureau maintains demographic data below the county level in units known as census tracts, which are small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of counties. Census tracts usually have between 2,500 and 8,000 persons and, when first delineated, are designed to be homogenous with respect to race and income. Census tracts do not cross county boundaries and vary in size according to the density of population. Indiana County has 22 census tracts. Each census tract has a unique number and may be further divided for statistical purposes into small units referred to as "blocks." For instance, census tract 9619 in Conemaugh Township contains four blocks. The Saltsburg Connection would run through block 3 of census tract 9619 and block 2 of census tract 9618. (See Figure 7, 2000 Census Block Groups.)

The most recent year for which census data below the county level are available is 2000.

According to 2000 Census data, contained in Appendix C and summarized in the table below, the minority population of Indiana County was 2.90 percent. The minority population of census tract 9619, block 3 was 0.48 percent. The minority population of census tract 9618, block 2 was 0.28 percent. These data demonstrate that the populations of the communities potentially affected by the Proposed Action contain substantially fewer minorities than Indiana County as a whole. The 2000 Census did not gather income data in levels below census tracts. The 2000 data show that the low-income population of Indiana County was 17.3 percent, whereas the low-income population of census tract 9619 was 12.1 percent and the low-income population of census tract 9618 was 13.6 percent. These data demonstrate that the communities potentially affected by Norfolk Southern's proposed construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection are comprised of substantially smaller percentages of low-income population persons than Indiana County as a whole.

TABLE 3-2 Potential Environmental Justice Populations

	Total Population	Percentage Minority	Percentage Low-Income
Indiana County	89,605	2.90	17.3
Census tract 9619 Block 3 (Saltsburg Connection)	1,468	0.48	12.1*
Census tract 9618 Block 2 (Saltsburg Connection)	1,062	0.28	13.6*

* indicates data for entire census tract

3.13 TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

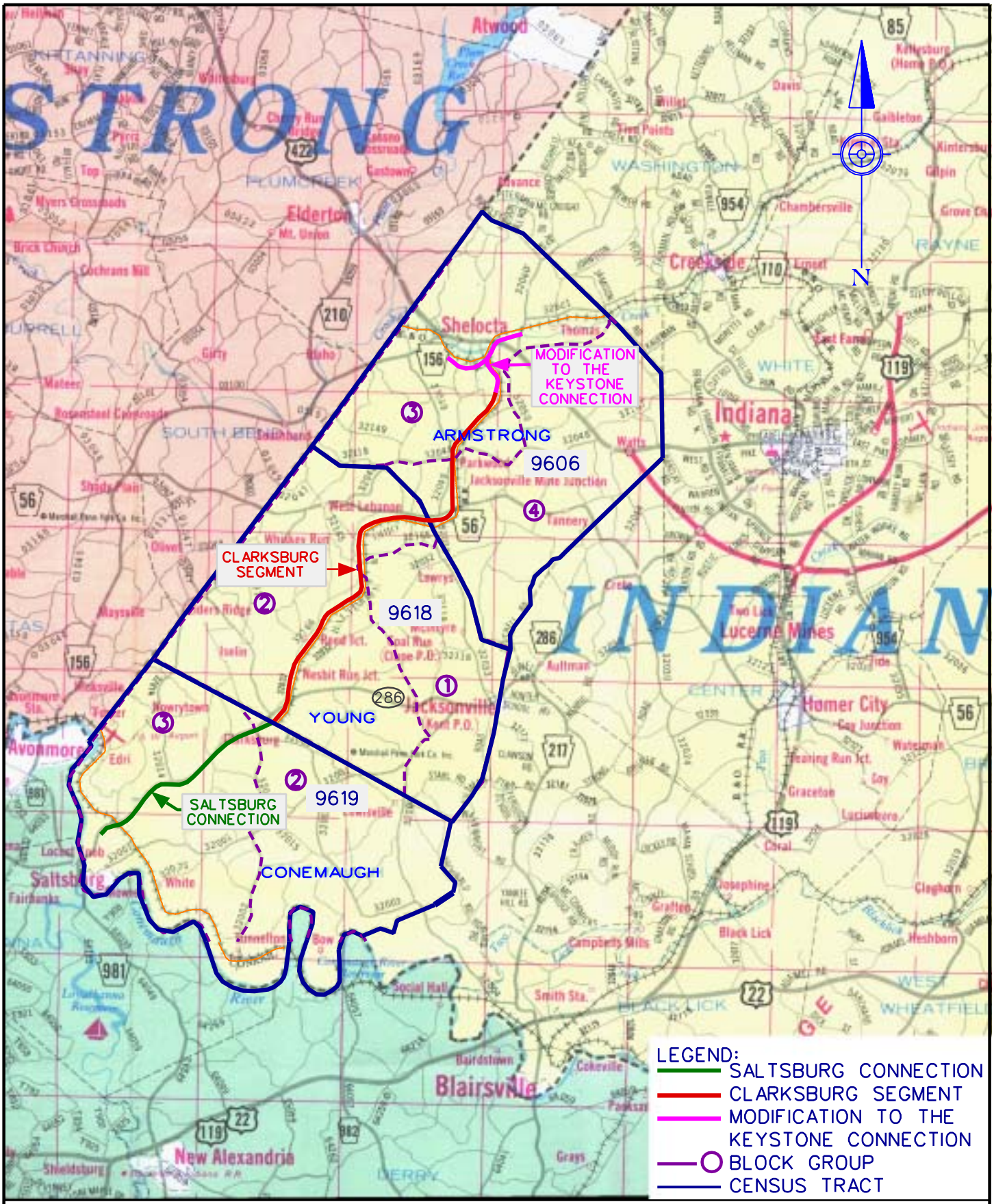
This section describes the existing transportation resources and their role in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

3.13.1 Approach and Methodology

Information regarding traffic volumes and grade crossings is based upon field observations, traffic count studies, and existing project plans. The proposed Saltsburg Connection would intersect the routes of three roads: Bell Road, S.R. 3007, and S.R. 286. Only Bell Road would be crossed at-grade. A traffic study was conducted to obtain traffic data for Bell Road using methodologies recommended in the Manual of Transportation Engineering Studies published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Vehicle counts were taken December 11, 2001 through December 17, 2001 on Bell Road and on Rose Road, which intersects Bell Road near the proposed grade crossing. Automatic traffic counters were used for the counts.

3.13.2 Existing Vehicular Traffic

The proposed Saltsburg Connection would cross only Bell Road at-grade. Bell Road experiences very low volumes of vehicular traffic, with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of 331 vehicles as measured during the December 2001 traffic study. This number is well below the ADT volume of 5,000 vehicular that SEA considers to be a minimum threshold for assessing at-grade crossings where vehicular delay due to an increase in train traffic



2000 CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK GROUPS

BASE MAP VISUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

STB SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	DATE: OCTOBER 2002	FIGURE 7
	SCALE: 1" = 2.94 MILES	

could potentially be significant.[11]

The automatic traffic counters were used during the December 2001 traffic study to identify the classes of vehicles, based on the Federal Highway Administration class format. Passenger cars accounted for the highest percentage of vehicles counted, ranging from 46.3 percent to 51.4 percent of all traffic on Bell Road and Rose Road.

3.13.3 At-Grade Crossings

The proposed Saltsburg Connection would require the construction of one new at-grade crossing at Bell Road.

3.13.4 Grade Separated Crossings

The proposed Saltsburg Connection would be grade-separated from both S.R. 3007 and S.R. 286 via rail bridges to be constructed by Norfolk Southern. Because the crossings at both S.R. 3007 and S.R. 286 would be grade-separated, no impact on vehicular traffic or safety subject to mitigation would result from these new crossings.

3.14 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT - KEYSTONE PROJECT

The environment affected by the operation of the Saltsburg Connection extends beyond the Saltsburg Connection project area. Resources in the vicinity of the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment and the Keystone Connection Modification may experience environmental impacts as coal trains en route to the Keystone Plant continue northward past the Saltsburg Connection to the approach to the Shelocta Industrial Running Track. This section of Chapter 3 describes the existing environment beyond the Saltsburg Connection project area in the vicinities of the Clarksburg Segment and the modification of the Keystone Connection to the extent that environmental conditions in those areas differ from the conditions in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

Most existing environmental conditions beyond the Saltsburg Connection project area that may be affected by operation of the Saltsburg Connection are similar to the Saltsburg Connection project area. Where environmental conditions in the Saltsburg Connection project area have been described in county-wide, regional or similar broad geographic terms, further discussion of the existing environment has not been repeated here. For example, the regional air quality conditions described for the Saltsburg Connection, which are good, are the same for all segments of the Keystone Project.

[11] A subsequent traffic count at Bell Road, conducted September 10 - September 16, 2002, showed results similar to the results of the December 2001 traffic count. The September 2002 traffic count indicated an ADT of 393 at Bell Road, well below the 5,000 ADT minimum threshold applied by SEA to assess potentially significant vehicular delay at at-grade crossings.

The Clarksburg Segment extends from Young Township (the northernmost point of the Saltsburg Connection) north to Armstrong Township, there connecting with the Keystone Connection Modification. The area between Young and Armstrong Townships is remote and classified as 100 percent rural. The area is characterized by low-level ambient noise. No new at-grade crossings would be created along either the Clarksburg Segment or the modified Keystone Connection. There are no Commonwealth parks or forests or land dedicated to public recreational use in either township. Neither township maintains land use data.

The rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment traverses undeveloped wooded areas and cultivated agricultural fields. Approximately 12 residences are located within 150 feet of the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment rail line. There are no apparent significant sources of noise along the Clarksburg Segment. The main part of the Clarksburg Segment runs northward along the northern side of Blacklegs Creek for approximately one mile, crossing Nesbit Run, Blacklegs Creek, unnamed tributaries to both Anthony Run and Blacklegs Creek, and intermittent streams. The northern part of the Clarksburg Segment traverses through the Cowanshannock-Crooked Creeks watershed, which is in the Central Allegheny Sub-basin of the Ohio Basin. Anthony Run flows north to its confluence with Crooked Creek. Crooked Creek flows west to northwest through Crooked Creek Reservoir where its merges with the Allegheny River.

Modification to the existing Keystone Connection alignment would occur in Shelocta Borough (in Armstrong Township) on undeveloped property acquired by Norfolk Southern from the Keystone Plant. Shelocta Borough had a 1999 population of 106, and there are no residences within 150 feet of the track in the vicinity of the Keystone Connection. The area is characterized as light industrial, with a large mining operation (providing a portion of the Keystone Plant's coal supply), a tree farm and isolated forested areas nearby. Trains currently operate over the existing alignment of the Keystone Connection to connect with the Shelocta Industrial Running Track lead. Rail traffic is visible from S.R. 3039 and the nearby mining operation. Ambient noise in the vicinity of the Keystone Connection includes low level noise from traffic on U. S. Route 422 and from the movement over the existing Keystone Connection alignment of coal trains en route to and from the Keystone Plant.

CHAPTER 4
POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The chapter provides an overview of the potential environmental impacts from the proposed construction and operation of the Proposed Action, the Saltsburg Connection. Although the primary impacts from construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection rail line would occur within the Saltsburg Connection project area, some operational impacts associated with the development of the Proposed Action would extend beyond the immediate Saltsburg Connection project area.

4.1 LAND USE

The potential for local land use impacts from the construction and operation of a rail line generally arises from the acquisition of land for right-of-way and associated uses, as well as the effects on property adjacent to the new right-of-way. Additional impacts could arise if the proposed project were to change the area's current development trends or alter land use policies.

4.1.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA considered the following criteria to assess the significance of land use impacts:

- Interference with the normal functioning of adjacent land uses.
- Consistency and/or compatibility with local land use plans and polices.
- Permanent loss of Commonwealth-classified Agricultural Security Areas or Primary Agricultural Land or FPPA-classified Prime Farmland or Statewide Important Farmland.

4.1.2 Land Use Impacts

Construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection is expected to result in minimal impacts to current land use. Potential long-term impacts to existing land use would be limited to areas acquired for the rail right-of-way for the proposed rail construction and operation activities of the Proposed Action. The typical width of the right-of-way along the proposed corridor is 120 feet, though it narrows or widens as necessary to accommodate rail embankment and drainage facilities. The land within the corridor would be cleared as required to permit construction and conversion to an operating railroad corridor.

Based on the right-of-way requirements, approximately 109.49 acres of new right-of-way would be acquired for the proposed project. Of this total, approximately 73 acres are currently wooded vegetation, about 13 acres are currently cropland, an estimated 16.46 acres are open field, approximately 4.69 acres are currently residential, and 2.31 acres

surround the Federal Laboratories warehouse. Of the 109.49 acres acquired for new right-of-way approximately 23 acres would be used to operate the new rail line. Track and roadbed would be approximately 32 feet in width. The remaining acreage acquired would return to natural growth.

The construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection would not impact any Commonwealth-classified Agricultural Security Areas or Primary Agricultural Land subject to agricultural zoning or qualified for preferential tax assessment. Only a small amount of FPPA-classified Prime Farmland and Statewide Important Farmland would be affected by the proposed construction. The FPPA requires the calculation of a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for the proposed project because of the presence of Prime Farmland and Statewide Important Farmland soils in the Saltsburg Connection project area. According to (NRCS) regulations (at 7 CFR 658.4C), sites receiving an FPPA rating less than 160 need not be given further consideration for protection, and no alternative sites need to be evaluated. The rating for the Saltsburg Connection project area is 92, and thus no protective measures need to be taken for farmland soils.

Indiana County and the potentially effected townships (Conemaugh and Young Townships) were contacted (see Appendix A) regarding consistency with local planning documents.[12] Officials from Conemaugh Township in which the Proposed Action would be located raised the concern that the proposed project may be inconsistent with the joint 2000 Growth and Revitalization Plan for Conemaugh Township, Loyalhanna Township and Saltsburg Borough and the Indiana County Office of Planning and Development. Comments received by local officials on the plan from local residents along the corridor of the proposed Saltsburg Connection indicated some concerns that a new track might harm future development potential along S.R. 286 between Saltsburg and Clarksburg. While the Proposed Action would cross S.R. 286, no other activities are proposed that are associated with the Proposed Action. Moreover, given the absence of specific local development plans in the Saltsburg Connection project area, no impacts on current land use were identified.

Based on an evaluation of the Saltsburg Connection project area, it is unlikely that construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection would have significant impacts on land use. The construction and operation of the rail line is not expected to interfere with the normal functioning of adjacent land uses, or be incompatible with local land use plans and ordinances. There would be no permanent loss of Commonwealth-classified Agriculture Security Areas, Primary Agriculture Land, land subject to effective

[12]The Saltsburg Connection is located primarily within Conemaugh Township, extending approximately 2,000 feet into Young Township. The Shelocta Secondary line segment would also traverse Armstrong Township. All three Townships were contacted to determine if the Proposed Action would adversely affect land use activities in these Townships. Any operational impacts associated with the land use in Armstrong Township or the portion of Young Township beyond the Saltsburg Connection project area will be addressed in Section 4.14.

agricultural zoning, or significant loss of FPPA-classified Prime Farmland or Statewide Important Farmland.

4.1.3 Coastal Zone

The Proposed Action is not located in a Coastal Zone Management Area.

4.2 SOCIOECONOMICS

4.2.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA analyzed the socioeconomic effects of the proposed rail line construction and operation on the Saltsburg Connection project area. SEA considered impacts to be adverse if construction or operation of the proposed line would result in significant alteration to economic growth or noncompliance with adopted growth plans; cause displacement of a significant number of local residents; disrupt or sever community interactions and public services; or create negative effects to the local or regional economy.

4.2.2 Socioeconomic Impacts

Potential socioeconomic impacts related to the construction and operation of the proposed rail line are expected to be minimal. No new permanent employment is expected as a result of the project construction. Norfolk Southern states that it intends to construct the Saltsburg Connection using a combination of private contractors (for grading and bridge construction) and a Norfolk Southern workforce (for track construction and railway signal installation). Norfolk Southern anticipates that the grading and bridge construction would utilize a maximum of 30-50 contractor-directed employees, and a significant number would likely be drawn from local and regional organized labor pools and thus would not require short-term housing in the area of the project. Norfolk Southern anticipates that approximately 30 Norfolk Southern employees would be utilized for the track construction and railway signal installation work. These employees would be drawn from locally-assigned Norfolk Southern maintenance workforces, thus requiring no temporary housing. Norfolk Southern would operate and maintain the proposed line, likely using its work force presently in place. No long-term negative impacts to the local or regional economy would be anticipated.

Some decrease in regional employment related to the potential diversion of truck traffic to rail could occur if the proportion of rail to truck transportation increases over the years. The local economic infrastructure of the Saltsburg Connection project area, including retail businesses and the commercial service industry, appears to be adequate to absorb the potential impacts of the construction phase of the Proposed Action.

No residential or commercial displacements would be caused by the Proposed Action. No

impacts to community services are anticipated as there would be no taking of community facilities, no interruption of services provided by these facilities, and no impacts to patterns of community interaction.

No significant adverse impacts on economic development are expected to occur because construction and operation of the Proposed Action is not expected to adversely affect local economic development.

Additionally, the proposed Saltsburg Connection would not interrupt or displace any public services. The Proposed Action would also have no impact on recreational activities or uses in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

4.3 GEOLOGY

4.3.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA examined the potential for the Proposed Action to modify the geology and landforms of the Saltsburg Connection project area. Construction impacts that modify water flow are addressed in the Water Resources section, while impacts to soils are described in Section 4.1 Land Use .

4.3.2 Geologic Impacts

The construction of the proposed Saltsburg Connection rail line would result in the modification of the area topography where substantial cut and fill activities would be required to create the rail bed. Norfolk Southern and its construction contractors would abide by generally accepted industry construction practices to remove soil and rock and stabilize slopes. It is anticipated that controlled blasting of rock will be required during the excavation of the roadbed cut sections. The exact process and duration of the controlled blasting program will be determined by the nature of the underlying rock once exposed. Norfolk Southern requires all controlled blasting work on its property to be performed in strict compliance with applicable local, state and federal regulations and best management practices for this type of work. In addition, all controlled blasting programs developed by Norfolk Southern contractors are subject to review and final approval by the Norfolk Southern Design and Construction Department, and Norfolk Southern authorizes the performance of such work only by qualified licensed firms.

The estimated total quantity of unclassified excavation is 1.43 million cubic yards (MM CY). Of this, approximately 0.33 MM CY is to be used for fill and approximately 1.10 MM CY is excess material. Norfolk Southern proposes to offer its contractors the option to either utilize a designated site (upland pasture associated with the former Evergreen Estates property acquired by Norfolk Southern) within the Saltsburg Connection project area for placement of the excess material or to remove the excess material to an environmentally

appropriate off-site disposal location of their choosing. If utilized, the on-site area would be graded consistent with the existing adjacent topography. Upon completion of the construction project, all exposed soil slopes and surfaces would be vegetated.

SEA concluded that these construction activities would result in minor changes to the local geology. Furthermore, Norfolk Southern would voluntarily ascribe to post-construction mitigation measures such as re-grading and re-vegetation to return the undeveloped areas to pre-construction conditions. SEA concluded that additional mitigation would not be warranted.

4.4 WATER RESOURCES

Both the construction and the operation of the Saltsburg Connection would have temporary and permanent impacts on water resources.

4.4.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA used the following evaluation criteria to assess potential harm or loss to water resources:

- Degradation of groundwater quality.
- Alteration of creek embankments with rip-rap, concrete and other bank stabilization measures.
- Temporary or permanent loss of surface water area associated with the incidental deposition of fill.
- Downstream sediment deposition or water turbidity due to fill activities, dredging, and/or soil erosion form upland construction site areas
- Loss of aquatic, wetland and riparian vegetation/habitat.
- Degradation of water quality through sediment loading or chemical/petroleum spills
- Alteration of water flow that could increase bank erosion or flooding, uproot or destroy vegetation, or adversely affect fish and wildlife habitats.

4.4.2 Permitting

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, pursuant to Section 404(e) of the Clean Water Act, is authorized to issue general permits on a statewide basis for the discharge of dredged or fill materials and/or the placement of structures that are components of a single and complete project (including all temporary and permanent features) that individually or cumulatively result in direct or indirect impacts to 1.0 acre or less of waters of the U.S. (including jurisdictional wetlands). Indirect impacts include impacts to waters of the U.S. or jurisdictional wetlands that are indirectly affected by flooding, excavation, or drainage, as a result of the project.

Because construction of the Saltsburg Connection would impact more than 1.0 acre of waters of the U.S. or jurisdictional wetlands, it is likely that Norfolk Southern would be required to obtain an individual permit authorizing these activities from both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and PADEP through a Joint Permit Application (JPA). The JPA for the Keystone Project would include each structure identified above, any minor structures necessary for erosion and sediment control, and all the potential impacts to wetlands discussed. PADEP requires a JPA to include a mitigation plan to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce or eliminate environmental impacts from permitted activities. PADEP regulations implementing Section 404 of the Clean Water Act require persons who undertake construction activities that disturb areas greater than 5 acres to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from PADEP for any discharges of stormwater into navigable waters. See 25 Pa.C.S. Chapter 92. Because the Proposed Action would disturb approximately 80 acres, a NPDES permit would be required.

4.4.3 Construction and Operational Impacts to Water Resources

Based on its review of existing conditions and Norfolk Southern's proposed route alignment, SEA determined that construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection would impact:

- Perennial streams,
- Intermittent streams,
- Non-tidal wetlands, and
- Floodplains.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), regulate impacts to these resources through their respective permit programs. The activities that would impact water resources include construction of:

- Bridges,
- Culverts,
- Pipes, and
- Tracks and roadbeds.

4.4.4 Surface Water

Table 4-1 lists each structure to be constructed along the Saltsburg Connection with the identity of the surface water that could potentially be impacted by the proposed rail line.

TABLE 4-1 Proposed Structures

Type of Structure	Size of Structure	Length of Structure (ft.)	Waterway Crossed
Corrugated metal pipe	54" in diameter	138	Unnamed tributary to Blacklegs Creek
Twin-cell box culvert	8' x 5' per cell	218	Unnamed tributary to Blacklegs Creek
Corrugated metal pipe	60" in diameter	120	Unnamed tributary to Blacklegs Creek
Twin-cell box culvert	11' x 4' per cell	67	Unnamed tributary to Blacklegs Creek
Twin-cell box culvert	11' x 4' per cell	67	Unnamed tributary to Blacklegs Creek
3-span bridge		225	Marshall Run (and S.R.3007)
5-span bridge		430	Blacklegs Creek (and S.R. 0286)

Construction of the waterway structures would result in some alteration to watercourse beds, possible loss of aquatic and riparian habitats through the enclosure of waterways, and possible loss of embankments through the use of rip-rap, concrete, or other bank stabilization measures. Such impacts are subject to mitigation measures to be required by PADEP. PADEP generally requires enclosures of streams to be mitigated through restoration of degraded streams in the same watershed on a foot by foot basis. See 25 Pa.C.S. §105.191. This requirement applies to the combined length of the enclosures in excess of 100 feet. Since a total of 7,509 feet of stream would be affected, PADEP would likely require the Applicant to restore 7,509 feet of degraded streams in the Loyalhanna Creek and Cowanshannock-Crooked Creeks watersheds.

Construction of the rail track for the Saltsburg Connection is expected to disturb approximately 124 acres of land. Norfolk Southern would comply with Commonwealth stormwater runoff permit requirements, which include silt and sedimentation control such as silt fences and re-seeding of cleared areas.

Surface water could potentially be impacted if a spill occurred during operation of the Saltsburg Connection. However, coal is a non-hazardous substance and any spillage of coal would not have a significant adverse impact on the chemical integrity of surface water. The potential for such a spill is considered to be minimal. Norfolk Southern would implement an inspection and maintenance program to minimize the potential for

derailments. In addition, Norfolk Southern would prepare a spill prevention and emergency response plan to be implemented in the event of a spill or derailment into surface waters.

4.4.5 Wetlands and Floodplains

Wetland areas and anticipated impacts to wetland areas have been identified along the proposed rail line route (See Table 4-2 and Figure 4). Under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act, and Chapter 105 of the Pennsylvania Dam Safety and Encroachment Act, the discharge of dredged or fill materials into wetlands requires permits from PADEP and ACOE, which Norfolk Southern may apply for jointly. Under Section 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act, PADEP must certify that any such discharge would comply with the Commonwealth's water quality standards. The JPA process includes review of the proposed project's wetland impacts by ACOE, USFWS, EPA, PADEP, and PAFBC. This EA assesses wetland impacts that cannot be avoided or further minimized. Permitted wetland impacts usually require mitigation to ensure no net loss of wetland acreage and to replace the lost functions and values of the impacted wetlands. Mitigation for lost wetlands typically involves constructing new wetlands within the same watershed using at least a 1:1 replacement ratio.

A wetland survey conducted for the Keystone Project determined that the proposed rail alignment for the Saltsburg Connection would likely impact the jurisdictional wetlands and streams identified in Table 4-2 for a net wetland loss of 2.68 acres. Norfolk Southern would be required to comply with mitigation requirements contained in the joint permit issued by ACOE and PADEP, which would likely require the creation of new wetlands in Loyalhanna Creek and Cowanshannock-Crooked Creeks watersheds with a replacement ratio of at least 1:1.[13]

The proposed watercourse crossing structures and a small percentage of the railroad track would be constructed within the 100-year floodplain. Title 25, Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 105, requires persons building a structure in a floodplain to obtain a permit from PADEP. These permitting requirements would be addressed through the same JPA submitted for construction of the structures in surface water and the discharge in wetlands discussed above. PADEP would impose permit conditions, such as contouring grades and aligning structures, to minimize impacts to flood flows.

Compliance by Norfolk Southern with the JPA conditions regarding mitigation of effects

[13]The wetlands identified in Table 4-2 and depicted in Figure 4 are based upon the findings in the Wetlands Identification and Delineation Report and review of that report by SEA. A final determination as to the amount and location of affected wetlands along the Saltsburg Connection, as well as the replacement wetlands Norfolk Southern would be required to provide, would be determined by ACOE and included in the joint permit to be issued by ACOE and PADEP.

to wetlands and floodplains would ensure that implementation of the Proposed Action would result in no significant adverse impacts to wetlands or floodplains from alteration of wetlands, loss of wetland habitat or vegetation, or alteration of volume or speed of flood flow.

4.4.6 Aquifers and Groundwater

Recharge to aquifers is not expected to be impeded because of the small amount of impervious surface associated with rail tracks and the utilization of proper run-off design. No aquifers would be disturbed in the areas of excavation for the proposed rail line.

Groundwater quality could potentially be affected if a spill or contaminant release occurred during rail line construction or operation and penetrated the aquifer. The likelihood of such a release, however, is extremely small due to proper containerization and handling and to the small quantities of fuels and oils that would be present during construction and operation. Should a release occur, the Norfolk Southern's emergency response and spill protection plans would be implemented as required by state and Federal regulations.

TABLE 4-2
Summary of Potential Wetland Impacts in Saltsburg Connection Project Area

Resource Classification	**Area of Impact in** ft^2
PFO (Wetland E)	11,791
PFO (Wetland O)	2,708
PFO (Wetland L)	4,349
PFO (Wetland U) PFO (Wetland Q) PFO (Wetland K)	3,751 4,351 14,427
PFO Total	**41,377 (0.95 Ac.)**
PSS (Wetland D)	2,432
PSS (Wetland J) PSS (Wetland AA) PSS (Wetland PP) PSS (Wetland QQ) PSS (Wetland D)	5,847 617 1,508 2,261 2,432
PSS TOTAL	**12,665 (0.29 Ac.)**
PEM (Wetland D)	2,031

PEM (Wetland E)	6,269
PEM (Wetland W)	14,767
PEM (Wetland J)	11
PEM (Wetland M)	1,101
PEM (Wetland O)	893
PEM (Wetland C)	16,911
PEM (Wetland V)	168
PEM (Wetland T)	5
PEM (Wetland S) PEM (Wetland NN) PEM (Wetland MM) PEM (Wetland LL) PEM (Wetland KK) PEM (Wetland SS) PEM (Wetland AA) PEM (Wetland Z) PEM (Wetland JJ) PEM (Wetland OO) PEM (Wetland G) PEM (Wetland RR)	613 2,132 10,329 1,347 178 253 617 528 1,486 1,673 439 993
PEM TOTAL	**62,744 (1.44 Ac.)**
TOTAL	**116,783 (2.68 Ac)**

Resource Classification Legend:
PEM = Palustrine Emergent wetlands characterized by herbaceous vegetation
PSS = Palustrine Shrub Scrub wetlands characterized by woody vegetation less than 20 feet tall
PFO = Palustrine Forested wetlands characterized by woody vegetation that is 20 feet tall or taller

4.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

SEA assessed the biological resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area and the potential for the proposed project to affect local species or to otherwise modify their habitats in the Saltsburg Connection project area. Biological resources include wildlife, vegetation, and species of concern.

4.5.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA used the following evaluation criteria for assessing the potential harm or loss to biological resources:

- Harm to or loss of individual or populations of threatened or endangered species
- Loss or degradation of critical habitat, sanctuaries, refuges, use areas or migration corridors for threatened or endangered species
- Loss of large numbers of non-threatened or non-endangered species

4.5.2 Wildlife Impacts

SEA anticipates that the greatest effect to terrestrial wildlife would be the conversion of land within the right-of-way from its current habitat uses, especially in forested and vegetative areas. Wildlife occupying habitat adjacent to the rail right-of-way could also be subject to sporadic disturbance related to noise-generating construction activities and subsequent train operations.

Construction of the rail line may temporarily displace local terrestrial wildlife because of increased noise from construction equipment and the presence of humans. However, such disturbances are expected to be temporary and not result in any major redistribution of resident species.

Construction and operation of the rail line would require the clearing of vegetation within the right-of-way along the track and roadbeds. This would decrease the available habitat for some wildlife species, particularly in areas not previously disturbed. However, the loss of habitat would unlikely be substantial given the abundance of similar habitat within the vicinity and region.

Implementation of the Proposed Action is not expected to cause notable impacts to wildlife from either harm to, or loss of, individuals or populations.

4.5.3 Vegetative Impacts

SEA anticipates that natural vegetation loss as a result of the proposed Saltsburg Connection would be primarily limited to woodland, open field and wetland areas within the immediate construction area. Impacts to these plant communities would be minor and would not have a significant effect on the availability of habitat types within the Saltsburg Connection project area. High quality habitat along the proposed route was not identified.

4.5.4 Threatened and Endangered Species Impacts

SEA correspondence with applicable state and federal agencies revealed no Federal or state endangered or threatened wildlife or plants that are known to exist along the proposed route. Consequently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has indicated that construction and operation of the proposed rail line would not have an adverse effect on any protected species. In addition, there are no wildlife sanctuaries, refuges, or national or state parks located in the vicinity of the proposed route. (See Appendix B, Document B4)

4.6 ENERGY

Consistent with STB regulations, SEA evaluated the potential for the proposed project to affect the movement of energy resources and recyclable commodities. The Proposed Action would affect the movement of coal resources in Pennsylvania. The Proposed Action would not affect the movement of recyclable commodities. This section analyzes the potential for energy-savings to occur as a result of the proposed action.

4.6.1 Evaluation Criteria

The criteria for evaluating energy savings are the change in overall energy efficiency as it relates to the Proposed Action.

4.6.2 Energy Savings in Rail Operations

Norfolk Southern presently transports coal to the Keystone Plant in unit trains moved by four 6-axle steerable- truck diesel locomotives (SD80 MAC 5,000 horsepower locomotives) hauling approximately 10,800 tons of coal distributed in l00 coal cars. Each ton of coal, therefore, requires 1.85 horsepower to transport. According to Norfolk Southern, these specialized 6-axle locomotives are in short supply, and Norfolk Southern currently requires ten (of its supply of 17) of these locomotives to operate over the steeply graded Northern Route that serves the Keystone Plant.

Construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection and subsequent development of the Keystone Project would allow unit trains to use three conventional high-adhesion 6-axle locomotives (similar to C40-9 4,000 horsepower models) to haul approximately 14,040 tons of coal distributed in 130 coal cars per train. These trains would travel over a level route expending an average of 0.85 horsepower per ton of coal.

Norfolk Southern believes that the project would likely derive energy benefits even if the total amount of coal transported to the Keystone Plant by rail remains constant because of the reduction in required locomotive power, the ability to haul more coal per trainload and the shorter distance of each round trip by rail. However, Norfolk Southern anticipates that coal transport would likely increase using the Southern Route if authority to construct and

operate the Saltsburg Connection is approved. The energy savings from rail transportation would be one kilowatt per ton of coal. In addition, if Norfolk Southern's proposed project to construct the Saltsburg Connection is approved and the Shelocta Secondary is completed, the trip to the Keystone Plant would be reduced by approximately 51 miles over the current route, with a round trip reduction of 102 miles. The shorter distance would result in a reduction in total annual miles traveled of approximately 38,400 rail miles, assuming the current volume of coal transported.

4.6.3 Energy Savings in Truck-to-Rail Diversions

If the Saltsburg Connection is approved and the Keystone Project is completed, Norfolk Southern anticipates that it would transport additional tons of Pittsburgh Seam coal to the Keystone Plant via rail. This would result in a commensurate reduction in the amount of Central Pennsylvania coal transported by truck to the Keystone Plant. Fuel efficiency for rail is significantly greater than fuel efficiency for trucks.

Norfolk Southern states that it would realize fuel efficiencies of 702.9 gross ton-mile (GTM)/gallon for the rail transport of coal, compared to an average truck (medium to long haul) fuel efficiency of 140 GTM/gallon) for the same amount of coal transported. This rail diversion would make rail transportation more than five times as fuel-efficient per mile as transportation by truck. The expected increase in coal transported via rail and the commensurate decrease in coal delivered by truck would significantly reduce the amount of diesel fuel expended to haul each ton of coal to Keystone Plant. Thus, one million tons of coal transported by truck would require about 7,143 gallons of diesel fuel per mile, whereas one million tons of coal transported by locomotive would require only about 1,423 gallons per mile. The analysis of the fuel savings is provided in Appendix D.

4.6.4 Coal Use

Norfolk Southern has indicated that the construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection and subsequent implementation of the Keystone Project is expected to result in a decrease in the reliance by the Keystone Plant upon Central Pennsylvania coal. The additional tonnage of Pittsburgh Seam coal delivered by rail to Keystone Plant is expected to result in a commensurate decrease in the Keystone Plant reliance upon Central Pennsylvania coal. Pittsburgh Seam coal has a higher BTU value than Central Pennsylvania coal. As a result, less coal would be required per BTU generated by the Keystone Plant as the use of Pittsburgh Seam coal increases.

4.6.5 Recyclable Commodities

The proposed project does not involve the transportation of recyclable commodities.

4.7 HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES AND TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

4.7.1 Evaluation Criteria

Impacts related to hazardous materials are evaluated using the criteria listed below:

- Increase in generation or release of hazardous waste
- Increase in quantity of hazardous materials transported
- Potential disturbance of existing hazardous waste sites

4.7.2 Hazardous Waste Impacts

The Proposed Action would neither disturb nor generate hazardous wastes during construction or operation. The Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment of the project construction area did not identify any soils or sediments that required special handling or worker protection measures. Any waste generated in the normal course of operation and maintenance activities would be stored and disposed of in accordance with applicable environmental laws. The coal to be transported over the Saltsburg Connection is not classified as a hazardous material. No other materials are planned for movement on this line, including chemicals, hazardous materials, or hazardous waste.

4.8 AIR QUALITY

This section describes the potential impacts to air quality for both construction activities and operations, as determined by the STB thresholds for environmental analysis.

4.8.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA evaluated the potential for the Proposed Action to cause the following types of air quality impacts:

- Adverse impacts to air quality from short-term construction impacts
- Long-term degradation of air quality from rail operations
- Surface Transportation Board air quality thresholds as defined in 49 CFR Part 1105.7(d)(5).

4.8.2 Air Quality Impacts Construction Impacts

The construction phase of the Saltsburg Connection could temporarily affect air quality in the immediate Saltsburg Connection project area. Land clearing and transportation of fill material from borrow areas may result in a temporary increase in fugitive dust emissions.

Additionally, open burning of debris and any vegetation that is removed could contribute to temporary increases in particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and carbon monoxide emissions. To minimize impact from the potential release of pollutants, Norfolk Southern would apply standard construction mitigation measures (best management practices) to reduce fugitive dust emissions during construction activities. Any burning related to construction of the rail line would be conducted in accordance with PA Code Title 25, Chapters 121-145, Air Resources.

Air emissions related to temporary construction activities is unlikely to result in significant adverse effects on air quality due to their temporary, local, and controlled nature.

4.8.3 Operations Impacts

Indiana County has attainment status for all six NAAQS-regulated criteria air pollutants and the Saltsburg Connection project area is not a Class I area, a designation given to areas of pristine air quality that warrant protection. Norfolk Southern has stated that train travel over the Saltsburg Connection would be approximately five round trips per week, with a possible increase to approximately seven round trips per week as required by fluctuations in coal demand by the Keystone Plant. (This level of activity is well below the threshold applied by the STB to determine the need for quantifying air quality impacts generated by a rail line proposed for construction and operation.) Air quality impacts from the trains routed over the Saltsburg Connection are expected to be minimal. As discussed above in Section 4.6, construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection and subsequent completion of the Keystone project would result in a decrease in the consumption of diesel fuel. This reduction comes from the need for fewer locomotives to power a 30 percent larger unit train (130 carloads vs. 100 carloads) and a likely decrease in reliance by the Keystone Plant on truck transportation to deliver coal. Reductions in the amount of diesel fuel consumed would result in a comparable decrease in air emissions from diesel engines.

In April 1998, EPA promulgated air emission standards for locomotives. The standards identify nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and particulate matter as compounds emitted by locomotives that are of potential concern to air quality. The EPA standards establish manufacturing requirements for new or rebuilt locomotive engines to control emissions during locomotive operations. Locomotives operated by Norfolk Southern are subject to the EPA air emission standards.

The Proposed Action would not result in adverse impacts on air quality. Norfolk Southern projects a net annual decrease of 3,300 gallons of diesel fuel in consumption to supply the Keystone Plant with the current annual quantity of coal, approximately 2.3 million tons, over the proposed Southern Route. Combined truck and train diesel fuel savings would total nearly 300,000 gallons per year. Based on emission factors in EPA document AP-42: Compilation of Air Pollutant Emission Factors, Volume II: Mobil

Sources and the California Air Resources Board's Mobile Source Emission Inventory Outputs (MVEI7G), impacts to air quality would be beneficial given the following considerations:

- A combined truck and train decrease in carbon monoxide emissions of approximately 26 tons per year.
- A combined truck and train decrease in NOx emissions of approximately 40 tons per year.
- A combined truck and train decrease in hydrocarbon emissions of approximately 5.8 tons per year.
- A combined truck and train decrease in PMI0 emissions of approximately 0.96 tons per year.

Accordingly, impacts to air quality would not be significantly adverse.

4.9 NOISE

SEA evaluated the potential for the Proposed Action to impact the noise environment in the Saltsburg Connection project area. Although the Board's rail traffic threshold for quantification of noise impacts would not be exceeded, the type of noise that would be created and its effect on the Saltsburg Connection project area is described below.

4.9.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA evaluated the noise impacts using the Board threshold outlined in 49 CFR Part 1105. The proposed project would not exceed this threshold. However, the project would introduce a new noise source into the Saltsburg Connection project area adjacent to the Proposed Action.

4.9.2 Noise Levels

The level of train traffic projected to operate over the Saltsburg Connection would be approximately one round trip train movement per day. The level of rail traffic on the new line segment is not projected to exceed the Board's threshold, therefore the quantification of any noise impacts related to rail operations over the line is not warranted. Because approximately one rail round trip per day is projected to operate over the Saltsburg Connection, the potential increase in noise generated would not be significant in the largely rural area where the line would be situated. The area is sparsely populated with three residences located within 150 feet of the proposed centerline of the Saltsburg Connection rail line.

Train noise sources include diesel locomotives engine and wheel/rail interaction noise (or wayside noise) and horn noise. Wayside noise affects all locations in the vicinity of the rail line, and generally diminishes with distance from the source.

The Federal Railroad Administration has established a set of noise standards for the operation of locomotives that are applicable to Norfolk Southern rail operations. See 49

CFR §210.29. These federal regulations set upper limits on wayside noise levels produced by locomotives. The standards limit the decibel level of the noise produced by each locomotive. Norfolk Southern would operate in compliance with the FRA locomotive noise standards.
With substantially fewer than eight trains per day projected by Norfolk Southern to operate over the proposed line, rail traffic would not result in any adverse noise impacts. Norfolk Southern would remain subject to the FRA locomotive noise standards.
Horn noise is an additional noise source at grade crossings, and also generally diminishes with distance. FRA has issued a proposed rule covering the sounding of locomotive horns at highway-rail grade crossings. The proposed rule would implement a statutory requirement that locomotive horns sound at each highway-rail grade crossing unless certain exceptions are met. The proposed rule describes Supplementary Safety Measures that a community may use to establish a quiet zone within which locomotive horns would not be sounded. The rule would also establish an upper limit for the loudness of train horns. The proposed rule will not be effective until FRA completes its review of the regulation.

4.10 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the potential impacts to cultural resources, including archaeological and historical resources. Norfolk Southern has consulted with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) to ensure compliance with Commonwealth requirements for survey, analysis, and mitigation of cultural and historical resources. Norfolk Southern prepared two survey reports and submitted them to the PMHC for review in March 2002. Norfolk Southern's "Phase I and II Archaeological Investigations for the Proposed Norfolk Southern Railway Company's Saltsburg to Clarksburg Rail Line, Armstrong Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania" describes the archaeological resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area. Norfolk Southern's "Intensive-Level Historic Architectural Survey for the Proposed Saltsburg to Clarksburg Rail Line, and Conemaugh and Young Townships, Indiana County, Pennsylvania" describes the historic resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

In compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and the Board's regulations at 49 CFR 1105.8, SEA reviewed these reports and consulted with the PMHC to review and document the cultural and historic resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

4.10.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA used the following criteria for determining impacts to cultural and historical resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

- Identification of and potential eligibility of archaeological sites for inclusion in the *National Register*.

- Identification of and potential eligibility of historic architectural resources for inclusion in the *National Register*.

All archaeological work was performed in accordance with the requirements and criteria outlined in the provisions of the Bureau of Historic Preservation's *Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations* (BHP 1991). The reporting methodology and analysis for the cultural resource investigative activities are consistent with the requirements of the National Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665, as amended) and Advisory Council's Guidelines as set forth in 36 CFR, Part 800 for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties.

4.10.2 Archaeological Resources

The following methods were used to identify archaeological and cultural resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area:

- Review of Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey forms
- Pedestrian reconnaissance of the entire Saltsburg Connection project area
- Subsurface archaeological surveys in 8 areas
- Geomorphological assessment of the Saltsburg Connection project area
- Laboratory analysis of materials found in the survey work

Phase I investigations consisted of background research and systematic shovel testing in eight areas deemed testable using accepted professional criteria. Areas 1, 3, and 4 contained no archaeological remains. Areas 2 and 8 contained archaeological remains that were determined by the surveyors to be potentially significant. Phase I/II investigation uncovered three previously identified prehistoric sites within the Saltsburg Connection project area and identified one previously unrecorded prehistoric site and four previously unrecorded historic sites.

The Phase I/II investigations revealed a historic archaeological site in Area 2 that dates to the mid-nineteenth century. The site's boundaries are concentrated within a 20x20-meter (66x-66foot) area that may have once contained a small tenancy.

The PHMC reviewed the findings from the field and concurred that four sites were not eligible for the National Register or should not be recorded in the Pennsylvania Archeological Site Survey and require no additional study. The PHMC determined that three prehistoric sites in Area 8 within the project right-of-way were eligible for the *National Register* and would be adversely affected by the Proposed Action. The three prehistoric sites are: Olliver I Site (36 IN 157); Olliver III Site (36 IN 160); and Olliver IV Site (36 IN 428). The agency also determined that the historic archaeological site in Area 2 would be adversely affected by the project. The historic archaeological site in Area 2 is the Reed /Cribb site. (Appendix B, Document-B5 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum

Commission letter, dated July 22, 2002).

4.10.3 Historic Architectural Resources

The following methods were applied to determine impacts of the Proposed Action on the historic architectural resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area.

- Historical background research
- Interviews with knowledgeable local residents
- Site-specific research
- Intensive-level field survey

The historic structure survey identified 10 properties in the Saltsburg Connection project area. Nine of these structures were determined not to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Marshall Family House, is the only structure determined by the PHMC as being potentially eligible for the National Register. As described in Chapter 3, the Marshall Family House retains seven elements of national registry integrity. These are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Marshall Family House is not believed to be National Register-eligible as part of any historic district. In its vicinity, modern houses and buildings are interspersed with older resources that have lost their integrity through alternation over the years. The property is not part of any significant and distinguishable entity.

The National Register-eligible boundaries of the Marshall Family House are believed to encompass an approximately 2.4-acre parcel, historically associated with the resource, upon which the ca. 1790 house stands. See Figure 8. This parcel includes the house's grounds, garage, and entry drive. On the north side, the property extends from the front yard to the property line at Blacklegs Creek. To the east and west, it extends from the side yard to a fence line and pasture on the west and at a tree-edged property line on the east. South of the house, the boundary includes the entry and connected oval drive, within which the garage stands. Excluded from the proposed boundaries are two twentieth-century barns built past the house's period of significance. Also excluded, beyond the barns, is the remainder of the 127-acre parcel currently associated with the house. The shortest distance between the proposed boundaries and the proposed Saltsburg Connection centerline to the south is approximately 190 feet.

The PHMC reviewed the findings presented in the Historic Architectural Survey and concurred that the Marshall Family House was the only identified property eligible for listing on the National Register (Appendix B, Document-B3 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission letter, dated July 22, 2002). The PHMC expressed their opinion that the Proposed Action would not have an adverse effect on the Marshall Family House.

Avoiding an impacted area can mitigate potential adversely affected archaeological sites. However, the four archaeological sites (three prehistoric and one historic) on the Saltsburg Connection right-of-way cannot be avoided. The PHMC has requested that Norfolk Southern complete a Phase III investigation for those four sites (Appendix B, Document-B5 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission letter, dated July 22, 2002). A Phase III investigation involves a more extensive recovery of artifacts and review of features associated with the site. Norfolk Southern has submitted a work methodology for the Phase III investigation for approval by the PHMC. Upon completion of the Phase III investigation, Norfolk Southern would then submit the results of the investigation in a formal report to the PHMC.

The PHMC has concluded that the following four archaeological sites are eligible for listing on the National Register:

Reed Site (Cribb Site) (36IN424)
Olliver I Site (36IN157)
Olliver III Site (36 IN 160)
Olliver IV (36IN428)

At the request of the PHMC, Norfolk Southern has agreed to conduct a Phase III archaeological investigation of those portions of the four sites that are located within the proposed right-of-way for the Saltsburg Connection and to prepare a report on the Phase III archaeological investigation for review by the PHMC.

To mitigate the potential impacts of the Proposed Action on the four identified archaeological sites, SEA's preliminary recommended mitigation includes a requirement that Norfolk Southern complete the Phase III archaeological investigation and report for review by the PHMC.

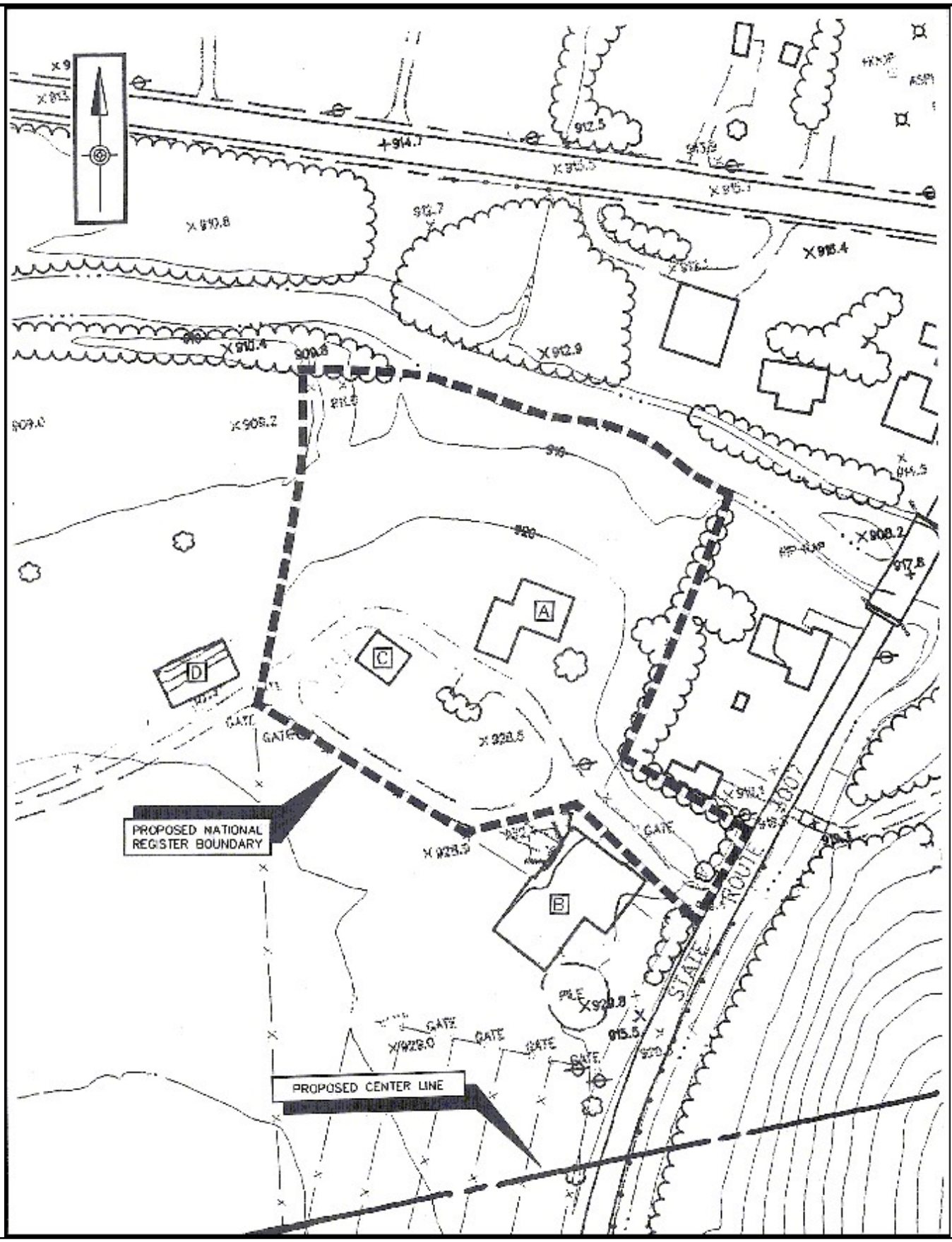
4.11 RECREATION

This section assesses the impacts on recreation resources in the Saltsburg Connection project area and region.

4.11.1 Evaluation Criteria

Potential impacts to recreational resources were evaluated using the following criteria:

- Loss or impairment of public recreational areas
- Harm to game species or other natural resources used for recreation



BOUNDARY OF MARSHALL FAMILY HOUSE

STB	SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	DATE: OCTOBER 2002 NOT TO SCALE	FIGURE 8

4.11.2 Impacts to Recreation

Construction and operation of the proposed rail line would not create a loss of or adversely affect access to the public recreational areas identified in the previous chapter. The Proposed Action would not directly affect any recreational area. The Saltsburg Connection project area is absent of public recreational areas, therefore, no impacts to public recreational areas are expected. Similarly, construction and operation of the proposed rail line would not affect game species of birds, mammals or fish. SEA concluded that the proposed rail line would not have an adverse impact on recreation due to loss or impairment of public recreational areas or harm to game species or other natural resources used for recreation and no additional mitigation is warranted.

4.12 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

4.12.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA analyzed the effects of the proposed rail line on low-income and minority populations in accordance with procedures outlined in Executive Order 12898 -"Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." SEA conducted an environmental justice analysis to (1) determine the presence or absence of environmental justice communities of concern in proximity to the proposed project, and (2) if such a community is present, determine the presence or absence of disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on the citizens of that community.

As part of this analysis, SEA reviewed the demographic and income data from the 2000 Censuses to compare the population of the area with the proposed project with that of Indiana County. SEA used the following criteria as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for identifying these Communities of Concern:

- At least one-half of the census block being analyzed is minority status, or
- At least one-half of the census block being analyzed is low-income status, or
- The percentage minority of the census block being analyzed is more than 10 percentage points higher that the percent minority for the entire county in which the block is located, or
- An adverse environmental justice effect would occur if any significant adverse effect of the proposed construction or operation were to fall disproportionately on low-income or minority populations.

4.12.2 Environmental Justice Impacts

As described in Chapter 3, SEA ‘s review of the demographic characteristics of Indiana

County did not identify any populations in the Saltsburg Connection project area that would meet the criteria for low-income or minority populations. Based on this review of the demographics of communities within the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action, construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection would have neither a disproportionately high nor adverse environmental impact on minority or low-income communities. Therefore, no environmental justice impacts would occur if the Board approved of the application to construct and operate the Saltsburg Connection. No further assessment of potential environmental justice impacts is required for the proposed project.

4.13 TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

This section describes the transportation and safety elements of the Proposed Action, for construction and operation activities.

4.13.1 Evaluation Criteria

SEA used the following criteria to determine impacts of the Proposed Action on the highway and road network in the Saltsburg Connection project area:

- Need for new grade crossings
- Safety conditions at highway/railroad at-grade crossings
- Construction impacts to area roads
- Expected traffic delay
- Risk of occurrence of train accidents, derailments, and other incidents.

The Saltsburg Connection would introduce a new transportation mode to the Saltsburg Connection project area. At a few locations the rail line would intersect with the existing road system in Indiana County. Two grade separations are proposed to be constructed over S.R. 286 and S.R. 3007. One at-grade intersection is proposed to be constructed at Bell Road.

4.13.2 Grade Separations

Norfolk Southern has proposed two grade-separated crossings for the Saltsburg Connection at S.R. 3007 and S.R. 0286. Rail traffic would be separated from the vehicle traffic by a rail overpass, resulting in no train/vehicle conflicts and no potential safety issues associated with these crossings.

4.13.3 At-Grade Crossing

As described in Chapter 3, the Bell Road grade crossing is the only new railroad at-grade crossing to be constructed in connection with the Saltsburg Connection. The proposed

Saltsburg Connection would run on an approximately east-west axis as it crosses Bell Road on level ground. About l00 feet north of the crossing, Rose Road forks off Bell Road in a westerly direction at generally the same vertical level, while Bell Road rises up a heavily forested steep grade of approximately 13 percent (See Figure 9). The curvature of Bell Road approaching the proposed at-grade crossing creates a sight distance of approximately 200 feet.

To accommodate the proposed rail crossing surface, Bell Road would be raised approximately 2 feet in grade in the vicinity of the at-grade crossing, which would require approximately 325 linear feet of Bell Road to be reconstructed. Bell Road is posted with a 10-ton weight limit and has no posted speed limit, which equates to a speed limit of 55 miles per hour (m.p.h.) in accordance with the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, 75 Pa.C.S. § 3362.

Field evaluation by Norfolk Southern shows the curve east of the location of the proposed Bell Road at-grade crossing to have an approximate safe vehicular operating running speed of 25 to 30 m.p.h., which would allow an approximate operating speed for cars at the crossing of 30 m.p.h.[14]

The alignment, configuration, and signalization of the Bell Road at-grade crossing is being coordinated with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PPUC), which has regulatory authority over these matters, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The regulators have not yet made final selections, but Norfolk Southern intends to install the appropriate warning devices as deemed necessary by the regulators at this location. Also, Norfolk Southern would comply with the criteria for alignment and construction of the Bell Road at-grade crossing as determined by the regulators to be appropriate.

SEA is aware of concerns raised by the Conemaugh Township Supervisors about the safety of Bell Road traffic at the proposed grade crossing. These concerns were raised in correspondence received by SEA in March 2001 from the Chairman of the Conemaugh Township Supervisors. Safety issues cited in their letter include the curvature of Bell Road and the incline of the road near the point of the proposed crossing.

With the implementation of the grade crossing safety mitigation volunteered by Norfolk Southern, the implementation of the Proposed Action would not have any significant impacts on transportation or safety resulting from unsafe conditions at railroad grade crossings, unreasonable traffic delays, or derailments, coal spills or other incidents. To

[14]A report on the field survey for Bell Road, conducted by Norfolk Southern in December 2001, was provided by Norfolk Southern to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Conemaugh Township Board of Supervisors and several federal, Commonwealth andcounty representatives.

address the Township's safety concerns Norfolk Southern has agreed to the following stipulations:

- Norfolk Southern shall coordinate at-grade crossing construction with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Indiana County in order to minimize traffic delay during crossing construction. Norfolk Southern shall use appropriate signs and barricades to control traffic during construction.

- Norfolk Southern shall develop internal emergency response plans for construction to allow for agencies and individuals to be notified in case of an emergency.

- Norfolk Southern shall provide the emergency response plans to state and local entities.

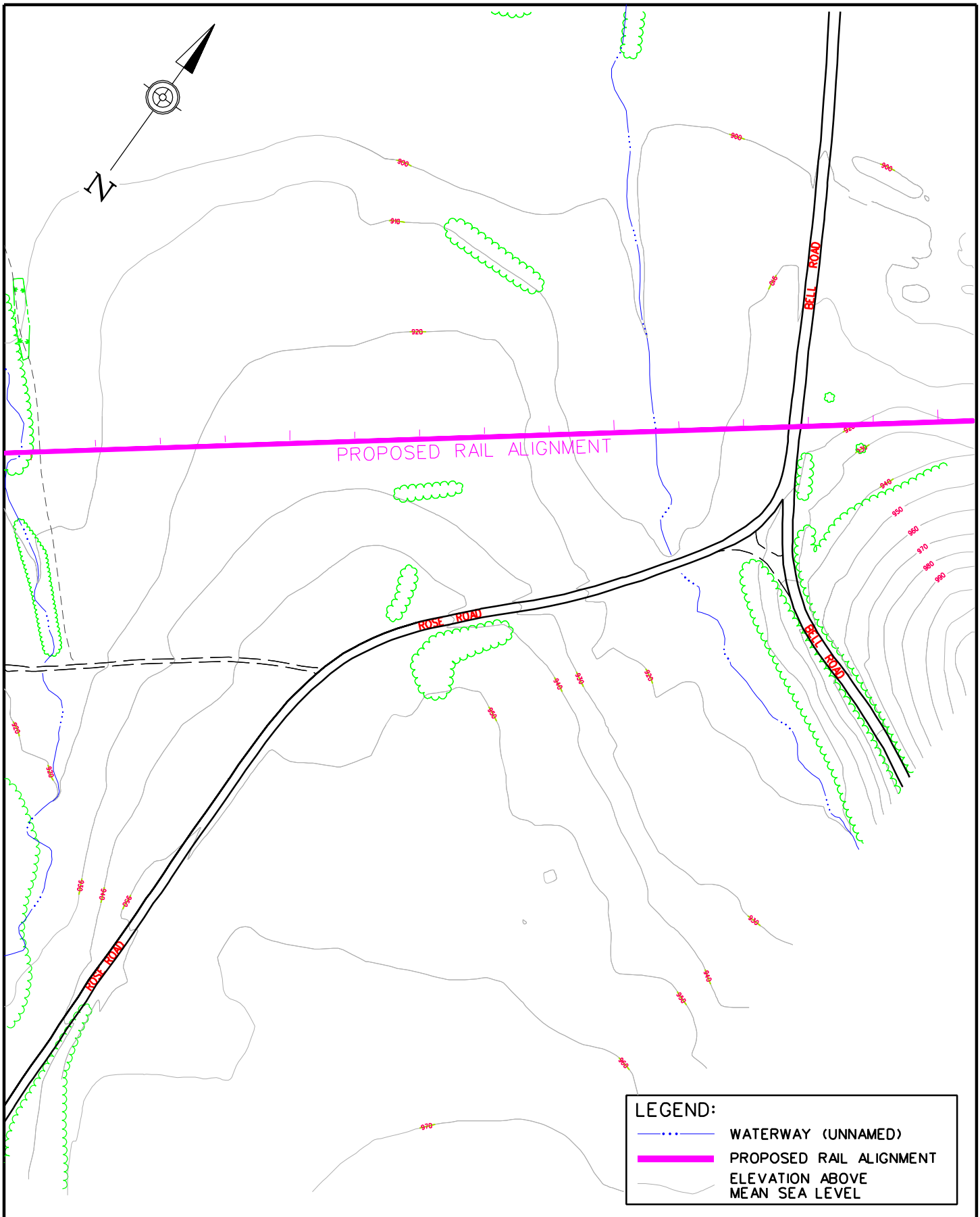
- As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall install at its sole cost, active rail/highway grade warning devices consisting of pole and cantilever mast mounted flashing lights and gates, and roadway modifications to improve the geometric conditions of Bell Road to enhance vehicular sight distance, subject to the approval of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

- As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall improve, at its sole cost, the intersection of Bell and Rose Roads to enhance the level of safety at the existing intersection in consultation with the Pennsylvania DOT and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

4.13.4 Construction Impacts

Two overhead bridges are proposed for the Saltsburg Connection. Construction of the overhead bridge at S.R. 286 would be north of Clarksburg, near the location of the abandoned Federal Laboratories building. The second bridge would cross S.R. 3007. Construction of the bridges would occur over several months. The periodic closing of roads or traffic delays to the public would be limited to periods during construction of the bridge piers directly adjacent to travel lanes and the staging/setting of the bridge spans. The pier work would require daytime lane closures of only brief duration, spread over several weeks as work progresses. The bridge span work would require multiple hours of daytime closure of roadways over a period of approximately three days per structure.

With respect to the Bell Road grade crossing construction, lane use restrictions or road closure would occur only for short times, over several non-consecutive days, while track is installed and adjustments or tie-ins are made to the existing roadway profile. Detour routes would be made available as necessary. Norfolk Southern would station equipment so that any total closures would be minimized, allowing the disturbed area to be quickly restored for passage by emergency vehicles. The extent of lane restrictions or road



BELL ROAD CROSSING

STB	SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	DATE: OCT 2002	FIGURE 9
		SCALE: 1"=2000'	

closures would be similar to that encountered by the public during routine highway maintenance or resurfacing projects.

Permission for and scheduling of lane restrictions or road closures, as well as detour approvals, would be obtained in coordination with the appropriate public transportation agency. Norfolk Southern would consider maintenance of emergency response capabilities and school bus schedules in planning and executing the necessary road work. Norfolk Southern or its designated contractor would be responsible for the cost of all permits, detours, coordination with local officials and agencies, and public notifications related to temporary lane restrictions or road closures.

4.13.5 Operations Impacts

4.13.5.1 Impact on Vehicular Traffic

Norfolk Southern projects that approximately one round trip rail movement a day, moving at approximately 25 miles per hour, would operate over the Bell Road at-grade crossing. The light volume of train traffic expected to cross the Bell Road at-grade crossing would consist of through traffic, with potential stoppage for any significant length of time likely only in the unusual instance of a mechanical or other emergency situation.

Bell Road experiences a low volume of vehicular traffic, with an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count of 331 vehicles determined during a December 2001 traffic count and an ADT of 393 vehicles from a subsequent traffic count conducted in September 2002. SEA considers an ADT of 5,000 vehicles to represent a minimum traffic volume with the potential for significant vehicular delay. The at-grade crossing at Bell Road is not expected to result in vehicular delays warranting mitigation.

The Bell Road crossing is not expected to have rail traffic delays sufficient to delay emergency response vehicles. A minimum of eight trains per day operating over an at-grade crossing is the minimum rail traffic volume with the potential for a significant impact on emergency response delay or emergency vehicles. According to the Conemaugh Township Emergency Management Coordinator, fire companies are located on both sides of the proposed Bell Road at-grade crossing, with fire rescue service in the area covered by the Saltsburg Volunteer Fire Company and the Tunnelton-Conemaugh Volunteer Fire Company. As indicated above, no switching or other routine operations would occur in the area of the Bell Road crossing to increase the potential for lengthy rail stoppages blocking Bell Road.

4.13.5.2 Risk of Derailment or Spills

The unit coal trains Norfolk Southern would operate over the Saltsburg Connection do not involve the transportation of hazardous materials. Any hazardous waste or materials

generated in the normal course of construction, operation and maintenance activities would be stored and disposed of in accordance with applicable environmental laws.

Norfolk Southern would implement an inspection and maintenance program to minimize the potential for derailments. In addition, Norfolk Southern would implement its spill prevention and emergency response plan in the event of a coal spill or derailment.

4.14 RELATED ACTIONS - KEYSTONE PROJECT

As discussed earlier in this EA, as part of its Keystone Project to develop the Southern Route, Norfolk Southern would, in addition to the Proposed Action to construct and operate the Saltsburg Connection, rehabilitate the Clarksburg Segment and modify the existing Keystone Connection to access the Keystone Plant via the Shelocta Secondary.

Norfolk Southern proposes to operate approximately two trains per day over the length of the Shelocta Secondary, one inbound and one outbound to the Keystone Plant. Each train would consist of approximately 130 cars. Train speeds would be limited to 25 miles per hour. This section of Chapter 4 analyzes the environmental impacts of operating approximately one train round trip per day over the rehabilitated Clarksburg Segment and the modified Keystone Connection en route to and from the Keystone Plant. The environmental impacts of construction and operation of the Saltsburg Connection have been previously discussed in detail in Section 4.10.5. However, some of the information related to operations over the Saltsburg Connection will be repeated here to assist the reader in understanding the full breath of environmental impacts associated with operating over the entire length of the Shelocta Secondary route to access the Keystone Plant.

SEA has determined that the Clarksburg Segment and the modified Keystone Connection would have the potential to impact transportation and safety, air quality, land use, wetland resources and noise, but that all of these impacts can be effectively addressed through the mitigation developed for this EA. Potential environmental impacts from the rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment and the modification of the Keystone Connection were considered by SEA and included potential highway safety and vehicular/train conflicts, potential at-grade crossing impacts, potential delay to emergency vehicles, potential impacts from transport of hazardous materials, potential increases in noise levels and air pollution, and potential conflicts with existing land use and land use plans.

4.14.1 Land Use

Potential long-term impacts to existing land use would be limited to areas acquired for new rail right-of-way required for rail operations. Existing land use would be unaffected by the rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment, as no additional right-of-way would be acquired. Approximately 3.91 acres of new right-of-way was acquired for the modification of the existing Keystone Connection. Of that acreage, approximately 1.1

acres would be required for track and road bed, with the remaining acreage to be returned to natural vegetation. Most of the land in Young and Armstrong Townships through which trains on these segments would pass is rural undeveloped wooded area and agricultural fields. The rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment and the modification of the existing Keystone Connection are unlikely to have significant impacts on land use.

4.14.2 Transportation and Safety

Norfolk Southern proposes to operate approximately one inbound and one outbound train per day over the Clarksburg Segment and the modification to the Keystone Connection. Each train would consist of approximately 110 cars. Train speeds would be limited to 25 miles per hour. No new grade crossings would be required for the rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment and the modification of the existing Keystone Connection. Based on the projected level of rail traffic, it is not expected that operations over the Clarksburg Segment or the modification to the Keystone Connection would result in significant changes to the local or regional transportation system.

4.14.3 Wetlands Resources

The Wetlands Identification and Delineation Plan prepared by Norfolk Southern and submitted to ACOE and PADEP identified approximately .17 acre of Palustrine Emergent wetlands (characterized by herbaceous vegetation) and .04 acre of Palustrine Shrub Scrub wetlands (characterized by woody vegetation less than 20 feet tall), for a total of .21 acre of wetlands, in the area where the modification to the Keystone Connection would be situated. A wetlands survey conducted for the Saltsburg Connection determined that the proposed rail alignment would likely impact jurisdictional wetlands and streams for a loss of 2.68 acres. No additional wetland would be disturbed as a result of the rehabilitation of the Clarksburg Segment. The combined net loss of wetlands in Indiana County from the Proposed Action and the Related Actions is projected to be approximately 2.89 acres; however, restoration/creation of new wetlands as required by the joint wetlands permit to be issued by ACOE and PADEP would mitigate this loss. Norfolk Southern would also obtain a permit issued under the Pennsylvania Dam Safety and Encroachment Act prior to modifying and operating over the modification to the Keystone Connection.

4.14.4 Energy

Beneficial impacts to overall energy efficiency in the region would result from the Related Actions.

4.14.5 Air Quality

Fuel savings associated with the Related Actions would have beneficial impacts to air quality in the region.

4.14.6 Noise

Because only approximately one rail round trip per day is projected to operate over the Clarksburg Segment and the modification to the Keystone Connection, the potential increase in noise generated would not be significant in the largely rural area where those rail line segments are situated.

4.15 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) implementing the NEPA define cumulative impact as "the impact on the environment, which results from the incremental consequences of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions." (40 CFR 1508.7). This ensures that the range of actions that is considered in the NEPA document includes not only the project proposed, but also all actions that could contribute to cumulative impacts.

Using CEQ guidelines, SEA evaluated the cumulative impact from the proposed Saltsburg Connection and Norfolk Southern's larger project, the Keystone Connection. SEA consulted with local officials and local planning agencies to determine if other projects or activities would occur in the area. No other projects were identified. The environmental impacts of the Keystone Project have been addressed previously in this EA and will not be repeated in this Cumulative Impacts section.

CHAPTER 5
AGENCY CONSULTATION AND MITIGATION

This chapter summarizes SEA's consultation with federal, regional, state, and local agencies and officials regarding the proposed construction and operation of a rail line between Saltsburg, Pennsylvania and the Keystone Power Plant and SEA's recommended mitigation measures. The mitigation described below is based on SEA's evaluation of the information available to date, consultation with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies and voluntary mitigation proposed by the Applicant.

5.1 AGENCY CONSULTATION

Agency Consultation activities were undertaken with federal, regional, state, and local agencies to inform them about the proposed construction, to identify issues of concern, and to obtain information about environmental resources within the project study area. Specifically, in February and March 2001, SEA sent consultation letters to federal, state and local agencies introducing the proposed project, describing the alternatives, and requesting that any concerns be identified. Early consultation was to provide the agencies and officials with an opportunity to provide input at an early stage in the environmental process, prior to the preparation of the EA. Each consultation letter included a map of the study area. A list of the agencies consulted is provided in Appendix A.

In addition, some of these agencies were also contacted by Norfolk Southern while conducting field investigations and preparing the environmental report that they submitted to the Board.

5.1.1 Summary of Agency Comments

This early notification and coordination allowed for timely identification, evaluation, and resolution of environmental and regulatory issues during preparation of the EA. Although most of the responding agencies did not have any comments or concerns about the scope of the project, some agencies requested that specific issues be discussed in the EA. The following is a summary of comments received during the consultation process.

United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service

Concerns about encroachments on Prime and Important agricultural farmlands. Concerns about impacts to individual farms.

United States Department of Interior - Fish and Wildlife Service

The Service provided updated information on Federally listed endangered and threatened species as well as proposed species, candidate species, and species of concern.

Department of the Army, Pittsburgh District, Corps of Engineers

Coordination required for potential wetland impacts and permitting.

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Fugitive dust emissions should be controlled during construction.
Construction blasting should be coordinated with the Bureau of Mining and Reclamation.

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Determination should be made if the proposed project passes through or otherwise impact historic or archaeological sites.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Work to be performed within Pennsylvania Department of Transportation right-of-way should be coordinated with the District Engineer.

Conemaugh Township, Indiana County

Safety at rail crossings is a concern.

Young Township, Indiana County

The Township expressed a concern for the following issues:
Existing transportation
Unique or sensitive natural communities
Water resources quality
Thread and endangered species
Fish and wildlife
Aesthetic scenic areas
Historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources
Public health and safety
Noise
Hazardous materials
Air quality emissions

5.2 SEA RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

Based on the information available to date, consultations with appropriate agencies, and extensive environmental analysis, SEA developed preliminary environmental mitigation measures to address the environmental impacts of the proposed construction and operation.

SEA emphasizes that the recommended environmental mitigation measures in the EA are preliminary and it invites public and agency comments on these proposed environmental mitigation measures. In order for SEA to effectively assess the comments, it is critical that

the public be specific regarding and desired mitigation and the reasons for it.

SEA will make its final recommendations on environmental mitigation to the Board in a post-EA after considering all public comments on the EA and conducting further environmental analysis and agency consultation, as appropriate. The Board will then make its final decision regarding the project and any environmental conditions it might impose. When considering whether to grant final approval on the proposed transaction, the Board will consider the potential environmental effects and the approximate cost of any environmental mitigation it might impose on the project. SEA preliminarily recommends that any final decision by the Board approving the proposed rail line construction and operation be subject to the following mitigation measures.

SEA's recommendations include, but are not limited to, the following general mitigation measures:

Transportation and Safety

1. Norfolk Southern shall coordinate at-grade crossing construction with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Indiana County in order to minimize traffic delay during crossing construction. Norfolk Southern shall use appropriate signs and barricades to control traffic during construction.

2. Norfolk Southern shall develop internal emergency response plans for construction to allow for agencies and individuals to be notified in case of an emergency. Norfolk Southern shall provide the emergency response plans to appropriate state and local entities.

3. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall install, at its sole cost, active rail/highway grade warning devices consisting of pole and cantilever mast mounted flashing lights and gates, and roadway modifications to improve the geometric conditions of Bell Road to enhance vehicular sight distance, subject to the approval of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

4. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall improve, at its sole cost, the intersection of Bell and Rose Roads to enhance the level of safety at the existing intersection in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

5. Norfolk Southern or its designated contractor shall obtain permission for and scheduling of lane restrictions or road closures, as well as detour approvals, in coordination with the appropriate public transportation agency. Norfolk Southern or its designated contractor shall be responsible for the cost of all permits, detours, coordination with local officials and agencies, and public notifications related to

temporary lane restrictions or road closures.

6. Norfolk Southern shall consider maintenance of emergency response capabilities and school bus schedules in planning and executing the necessary road work.

7. Norfolk Southern shall implement an inspection and maintenance program to minimize the potential for derailments and shall implement a spill prevention and emergency response plan in the event of a coal spill or derailment.

Land Use

8. Norfolk Southern shall ensure that all areas disturbed by project-related construction activities which are not located on the railroad's property (such as access roads, haul roads, crane pad and borrow pits) are promptly restored as closely to their original condition, as is practical, following conclusion of project-related construction activities at that site.

9. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall ensure that all controlled blasting work required during excavation of roadbed cut shall be conducted by contractors in strict compliance with applicable regulations. In addition, all controlled blasting work shall be performed utilizing best management practices which include:

   - establishment and implementation of appropriate safety measures and procedures before, during and following all blasting activity for the protection of the public and employees;
   - performance of pre-blast surveys of adjacent properties and structures; and
   - performance of seismic monitoring during the blasting process.

Water Resources

10. Norfolk Southern shall obtain all necessary federal, state, and local permits if construction activities require the alteration of wetlands, or other water bodies or if these activities would cause soil or other material to wash into these water resources. Norfolk Southern shall use appropriate techniques to minimize impacts to wetlands and water bodies.

11. Norfolk Southern shall disturb the smallest area practicable around any waterway.

12. In instances in which Norfolk Southern uses contractors to apply herbicides, for right-of-way maintenance, Norfolk Southern shall use only contractors trained in herbicide application and shall require those contractors to follow label directions in applying herbicides and limit the amount potentially entering waterways. Norfolk Southern shall require contractors to use only herbicides regulated for such uses with Environmental Protection Agency and follow all state regulations

that requires their use.

13. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall comply with mitigation requirements contained in the joint permit to be reviewed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, including the creation of new wetlands acreage to replace altered wetlands in such replacement ratio as the joint permit shall specify.

Biological Resources

14. Norfolk Southern shall use Best Management Practices to control erosion, runoff, and surface instability during construction, including seeding fiber mats, straw mulch, plastic lined slope drains, and other erosion control devices. Once the track is constructed. Norfolk Southern shall establish vegetation in the embankment slope to provide permanent cover and prevent erosion. If erosion develops, Norfolk Southern shall take steps to develop other appropriate erosion control procedures.

Air Quality

15. Norfolk Southern shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations regarding the control of fugitive dust. Fugitive dust emissions created during construction shall be minimized by using such control methods as water spraying, installation of wind barriers, and chemical treatment.

Noise

16. Norfolk Southern shall control temporary noise from construction equipment through the use and maintenance of muffler systems on machinery.

17. Norfolk Southern shall comply with the Federal Rail Administration regulations (49 CFR Part 210) establishing decibel limits for train operations.

Cultural Resources

18. If Norfolk Southern identifies any undiscovered archaeological remains or other cultural resources during construction activities, Norfolk Southern shall immediately cease work, and contact the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Officer regarding appropriate measures to protect the resource.

19. As agreed to by Norfolk Southern, it shall complete a Phase III archaeological investigation of the four sites identified by the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission as potentially eligible for listing on the *National Register*. Norfolk

Southern shall prepare a report on the Phase III archaeological investigation for review by the PHMC. Pending completion of the Section 106 process, the Norfolk Southern shall ensure that the four archaeological sites – the Reed Site (Cribb Site) (36IN424), the Olliver I site portion of (36IN157) in the proposed right-of-way, the Olliver III site the portion of (36IN160) in the proposed right-of-way, and the Olliver IV site (36IN428) are not adversely impacted.

Southern shall prepare a report on the Phase III archaeological investigation for review by the PHMC. Pending completion of the Section 106 process, the Norfolk Southern shall ensure that the four archaeological sites – the Reed Site (Cribb Site) (36IN424), the Olliver I site portion of (36IN157) in the proposed right-of-way, the Olliver III site the portion of (36IN160) in the proposed right-of-way, and the Olliver IV site (36IN428) are not adversely impacted.

5.3 CONCLUSION AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date and its independent analysis, SEA preliminarily concludes that construction and operation of the proposed rail line would have no significant environmental impacts if the Board imposes and Norfolk Southern implements the mitigation recommended above. Therefore, the EIS process is unnecessary in this proceeding.

SEA specifically invites comments on all aspects of this Draft EA, including suggestions for additional mitigation measures. SEA will consider all comments received in response to the EA in making its final recommendations to the Board. The Board will consider the entire environmental record, SEA's final recommendations, including final recommended mitigation measures, and the environmental comments in making its final decision in this proceeding.

Comments (an original and 10 copies) should be sent to: Surface Transportation Board, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20423. The lower left-hand corner of the envelope should be marked: Attention: Ms. Phillis Johnson-Ball, Environmental Concerns, Finance Docket No. 33928. Questions may also be directed to Ms. Johnson-Ball at this address or by telephoning (202) 565-1530.

Date Made Available to the Public: November 20th, 2002
Comment Due Date: December 19th, 2002

APPENDIX A

AGENCY CONTACTS

Contact List of Agencies

Conemaugh Township Supervisors

Indiana County, Office of Planning And Development, Indiana County Courthouse Annex

Young Township Supervisors

Conemaugh Township

Southwest Pennsylvania Commission

Department of the Army, Pittsburgh District, Corps of Engineers

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, SW Office

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Water Quality

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Scenic Rivers Program

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection , Air Quality Division

Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Transportation

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Pennsylvania Geologic Survey

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum

Commission

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of District Mining Operations

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Pennsylvania Governor's Office of Policy and Planning

Pennsylvania Department of Aging

Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs

U.S. States Department of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service, Pennsylvania Field Office

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Natural Landmarks

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Wild & Scenic Rivers Program

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

APPENDIX B

AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

Appendix B

Letter Referenced	Date	Number
Indiana County Office of Planning and Development	March 28, 2001	B1
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation	March 22, 2001	B2
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission	July 22, 2002	B3
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service	March 20, 2001	B4
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission	July 22, 2002	B5

Indiana County
Office of Planning and Development

Indiana County Courthouse Annex
801 Water Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15701-3977

(724) 465-3870 (Voice)
(724) 465-3150 (Fax)
(724) 465-3805 (TDD)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Byron G. Stauffer, Jr.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

George R. Urban

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Bernie Smith, Chairman
James McQuown
Randy Degenkolb

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
REC'D: 4/3/01
DOCUMENT #

March 28, 2001

Chris Caperton
Public Affairs Management
1925 K Street, NW
Suite 450A
Washington, DC 20006

RE: Keystone Project, Finance Docket No. 33928

Dear Chris Caperton:

I am writing in response to your request for information on human and natural resources within the Keystone Project area. While we believe you have compiled a comprehensive list of federal and state agencies that will ensure coverage of all pertinent issues, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input. We offer the following comments relating to the corresponding resources or activities:

Land Use and Development
We do not have current land use and development information for the project area.

Existing Transportation Systems/Public Lands
Enclosed please find a 1997 General Highway Map of Indiana County Pennsylvania. This map identifies the existing transportation systems within the county, as well as the location of State and Federally owned public lands.

Wetlands
We've enclosed a county map depicting the location of wetlands, soil associations, and streams and lakes within the county. If you should need further information concerning these resources please contact the Indiana County Conservation District: 251 RT 286 N Indiana, PA 15701. Telephone: 724.463.9181.

Recreation Areas/Resources
We have enclosed a county map depicting federal, state and county managed recreation facilities and a map portraying the existing and proposed trail network within the county. We have also included maps of local municipalities located within the project area, on which we have identified the location of locally owned and managed recreation areas.

Should you desire further information, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

Leann C. Chaney

Leann C. Chaney, Senior Land Use Planner

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
REC'D: 3/29/01
DOCUMENT #

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Suite 340
One Credit Union Place
Harrisburg, PA 17110-2993

March 22, 2001

Chris Caperton
Public Affairs Management
1925 K Street, NW
Suite 450A
Washington, DC 20006

Re: Finance Document No. 33928
Norfolk Southern Corp. and Norfolk Southern Railway Company
Keystone Project
Indiana Co., PA
Request for Human and Natural Resources Information

As requested in your letter dated February 27, 2001, enclosed is soils information for the above-named project.

There does appear to be Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance in the vicinity of the proposed project. If these soils would be converted to non-agricultural uses by the project, and if federal funds are used to support the project, then impacts to farmland should be evaluated as described in rules and regulations for the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981.

Our local Indiana County office has been contacted by a farm owner/operator (Mr. Francis Olliver) whose farm is in the path of the proposed line. He has concerns not only about loss of his farmland, but also direct and indirect damages that may be done to conservation practices on his farm, including surface water swales and underground drainage. Our Indiana County office has confirmed that Mr. Olliver has worked with USDA-NRCS over a number of years to install and maintain these conservation practices on his farm.

We recommend that you consider not only overall loss of farmland from this project, but also impacts to individual farm operations such as Mr. Olliver's farm.

Contact me at (717) 237-2216; (717) 237-2238 FAX; email: barry.frantz@pa.usda.gov; if you need more information.

Barry Frantz

Barry Frantz
Soil Conservationist

Encl: Indiana County Soil Survey Map Sheets
List of Important Farmland for Indiana County
List of Hydric Soils for Indiana County
Copy of letter from Francis Olliver to Janet Oertly, NRCS

cc: Don Bowers, District Conservationist, Indiana, PA
Mr. Francis Olliver

HYDRIC SOILS - INDIANA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Map Symbol	Map Name	Hydric Component	Location Notes
Map units with major components hydric:			
ARA	Armagh silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Armagh (PA0094)	
ARB2	Armagh silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Armagh (PA0094)	
AT	Atkins silt loam	Atkins (WV0008)	
BKA	Brinkerton silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Brinkerton (PA0090)	
BKB2	Brinkerton silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Brinkerton (PA0090)	
BNA	Brinkerton silt loam, very wet, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Brinkerton (PA0090)	
BNB	Brinkerton silt loam, very wet, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Brinkerton (PA0090)	
BSB	Brinkerton very stony silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Brinkerton (PA0091)	
BTB	Brinkerton very stony silt loam, very wet, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Brinkerton (PA0091)	
NOA	Nolo silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Nolo (PA0129)	
NOB	Nolo silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Nolo (PA0129)	
PUA	Purdy silt loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes	Purdy (WV0034)	
Map units with inclusions of hydric components:			
AHA	Allegheny silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Wet spots	Depressions
AHB	Allegheny silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Wet spots	Depressions
AHC	Allegheny silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Wet spots	Depressions
CAA	Cavode silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Armagh, Brinkerton	Depressions
CAB2	Cavode silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Armagh, Brinkerton	Depressions
CAC2	Cavode silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Armagh, Brinkerton	Depressions
CAD2	Cavode silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Armagh, Brinkerton	Depressions
CCC3	Cavode silty clay loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, severely eroded	Armagh, Brinkerton	Depressions
CDB	Cavode very stony silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Armagh, Brinkerton	Depressions
CDC	Cavode very stony silt loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Armagh, Brinkerton	Depressions
COA	Cookport loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Nolo	Depressions
COB2	Cookport loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Nolo	Depressions
COC2	Cookport loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Nolo	Depressions
CPB	Cookport very stony loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Nolo	Depressions
CPC	Cookport very stony loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Nolo	Depressions

HYDRIC SOILS - INDIANA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA (cont.)

Map Symbol	Map Name	Hydric Component	Location Notes
ERA2	Ernest silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
ERB2	Ernest silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
ERB3	Ernest silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, severely eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
ERC2	Ernest silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
ERC3	Ernest silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, severely eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
ERD2	Ernest silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
ESB	Ernest very stony silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Brinkerton	Depressions
ESC	Ernest very stony silt loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Brinkerton	Depressions
PH	Philo silt loam	Atkins	Bottom lands
PM	Pope fine sandy loam	Atkins	Bottom lands
PO	Pope silt loam	Atkins	Bottom lands
TRA	Tygart silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Purdy	Depressions, flats
TRB2	Tygart silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Purdy	Depressions, flats
VAB2	Vandergrift silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Wet spots	Depressions, seepy areas
VAC2	Vandergrift silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Wet spots	Depressions, seepy areas
WRA	Wharton silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Brinkerton	Depressions
WRB2	Wharton silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
WRC2	Wharton silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
WRC3	Wharton silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, severely eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions
WRD2	Wharton silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Brinkerton	Depressions

PRIME FARMLAND

Survey Area- INDIANA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Map Symbol	Prime Farmland Code	Soil Mapunit Name
AhA	1	ALLEGHENY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES
AhB2	1	ALLEGHENY SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
AhC2	S	ALLEGHENY SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
CaB2	S	CAVODE SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
CaC2	S	CAVODE SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
CkB2	1	CLARKSBURG SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
CkC2	S	CLARKSBURG SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
ClA2	1	CLYMER CHANNERY LOAM, 0 TO 5 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
ClB2	1	CLYMER CHANNERY LOAM, 5 TO 12 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
CoA	1	COOKPORT LOAM, 0 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES
CoB2	1	COOKPORT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
DaA2	S	DEKALB CHANNERY SANDY LOAM, 0 TO 5 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
DaB2	S	DEKALB CHANNERY SANDY LOAM, 5 TO 12 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
ErA2	1	ERNEST SILT LOAM, 0 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
ErB2	S	ERNEST SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
ErC2	S	ERNEST SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
GcA2	1	GILPIN CHANNERY SILT LOAM, 0 TO 5 PERCENT SLOPES MODERATELY ERODED
GcB2	1	GILPIN CHANNERY SILT LOAM, 5 TO 12 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
GwA2	S	GILPIN-WEIKERT SHALY SILT LOAMS, 0 TO 5 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
GwB2	S	GILPIN-WEIKERT SHALY SILT LOAMS, 5 TO 12 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
GyB2	S	GUERNSEY SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
MoA2	1	MONONGAHELA SILT LOAM, 0 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
MoB2	S	MONONGAHELA SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
MoC2	S	MONONGAHELA SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
Ph	1	PHILO SILT LOAM
Pm	1	POPE FINE SANDY LOAM
Po	1	POPE SILT LOAM
TrA	S	TYGART SILT LOAM, 0 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES
TrB2	S	TYGART SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
UgB2	1	UPSHUR-GILPIN SILTY CLAY LOAMS, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED

PRIME FARMLAND

Survey Area- INDIANA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Map Symbol	Prime Farmland Code	Soil Mapunit Name
DgC2	S	UPSHUR-GILPIN SILTY CLAY LOAMS, 8 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
VaB2	1	VANDERGRIFT SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
VaC2	S	VANDERGRIFT SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
WmB2	S	WESTMORELAND SILT LOAM, 5 TO 12 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
WrA	1	WHARTON SILT LOAM, 0 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES
WrB2	1	WHARTON SILT LOAM, 3 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED
WrC2	S	WHARTON SILT LOAM, 8 TO 15 PERCENT SLOPES, MODERATELY ERODED

Prime Farmland Code	Description
1	All areas are prime farmland.
S	Farmland of Statewide Importance

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Bureau for Historic Preservation
Commonwealth Keystone Building, 2nd Floor
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093
www.phmc.state.pa.us

July 22, 2002

John A. Bonya
Bonya Gazza & DeGory, LLP
134 S. Sixth Street
Indiana, PA 15701

TO EXPEDITE REVIEW USE SHP REFERENCE NUMBER

Re: ER 02-1266-042-B
FRA: Proposed Norfolk Southern Railroad Saltsburg to Clarksburg Rail Line, Conemaugh and Young Townships, Indiana County and Modifications to the Existing Keystone Rail Connection, Armstrong Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania

Dear Ms. Wright:

The Bureau for Historic Preservation (the State Historic Preservation Office) has reviewed the above named project in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980 and 1992, and the regulations (36 CFR Part 800) of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. These requirements include consideration of the project's potential effect upon both historic and archaeological resources.

We concur with the findings of the agency that the following property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

1. Marshal Family Farm, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County: We concur with the boundary selected for this resource.

We concur with the findings of the agency that the following properties are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. They are not historically or architecturally significant.

2. Beatty Family House, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County
3. Clarksburg Presbyterian Church, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County
4. Lowman-Duffalo House, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County
5. House #6, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County
6. House #8, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County
7. House #9, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County
8. Chaplin Family House, Young Twp., Indiana County
9. Nowery-Compton-Oliver House, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County
10. Clarksburg Skateland-Federal Laboratories Warehouses, Young Twp., Indiana County

The property listed below, eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, is located near the project area. In our opinion, the activity described in your proposal will have no effect on this resources. However, this is not the final effect finding for the project until the review of the archaeological investigations are completed.

Marshall Family Farm, Conemaugh Twp., Indiana County

If you need further information regarding archaeological survey please contact Chan Funk at (717) 772-0924. If you need further information concerning historic structures please consult Susan Zacher at (717) 783-9920.

Sincerely,

Jean H. Cutler

Jean H. Cutler, Director

JHC/smz

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Pennsylvania Field Office
315 South Allen Street, Suite 322
State College, Pennsylvania 16801-4850

March 20, 2001

Chris Caperton
Public Affairs Management
1925 K Street, NW
Suite 450A
Washington, DC 20006

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
REC'D: 3/26/01
DOCUMENT #

Dear Mr. Caperton:

This responds to your letter of February 27, 2001, requesting information about federally listed and proposed endangered and threatened species within the area affected by the proposed construction of a rail line (Norfolk Southern Railway Company) to be located in Indiana County, Pennsylvania. The following comments are provided pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) to ensure the protection of endangered and threatened species.

Except for occasional transient species, no federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered species under our jurisdiction are known to occur within the project impact area. Therefore, no biological assessment nor further Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act are required with the Fish and Wildlife Service. This determination is valid for two years from the date of this letter. If the proposed project has not been fully implemented prior to this, an additional review by this office will be necessary. Also, should project plans change, or if additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered. A compilation of certain federal status species in Pennsylvania is enclosed for your information.

This response relates only to endangered or threatened species under our jurisdiction based on an office review of the proposed project's location. No field inspection of the project area has been conducted by this office. Consequently, this letter is not to be construed as addressing potential Service concerns under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act or other authorities.

Requests for information regarding State-listed endangered or threatened species should be directed to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (birds and mammals), the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (fish, reptiles, amphibians and aquatic invertebrates), and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (plants).

Please contact Michael McCarthy of my staff at 814-234-4090 if you have any questions or require further assistance.

Sincerely,

David Densmore
Supervisor

Enclosure

FEDERALLY LISTED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES (in Pennsylvania)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status[1]	Distribution
FISHES			
Shortnose sturgeon[2]	*Acipenser brevirostrum*	E	Delaware River & other Atlantic coastal waters
REPTILES			
Bog turtle	*Clemmys muhlenbergii*	T	Current - Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Delaware, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton and York Co. Historic - Crawford, Mercer and Philadelphia Co.
Eastern massasauga rattlesnake	*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*	C	Current - Butler, Crawford, Mercer and Venango Co. Historic - Allegheny and Lawrence Co.
BIRDS			
Bald eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	T	Suitable habitats across the state. Recent nesting in Butler, Cameron, Centre, Chester, Crawford, Dauphin, Erie, Forest, Huntingdon, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mercer, Northumberland, Pike, Tioga, Venango, Warren and York Co. Wintering concentrations occur near ice-free sections of rivers, lakes and reservoirs, including the Delaware River.
Piping plover	*Charadrius melodus*	E	Presque Isle (Erie County). Migratory. No nesting in Pennsylvania since mid-1950s.
MAMMALS			
Indiana bat	*Myotis sodalis*	E	Winter hibernacula: Armstrong, Blair, Lawrence, Luzerne, Mifflin and Somerset Co.
MOLLUSKS			
Dwarf wedgemussel	*Alasmidonta heterodon*	E	Current - Delaware River (Wayne Co.). Historic - Delaware River watershed (Bucks, Carbon, Chester and Philadelphia Co.); Susquehanna River watershed (Lancaster Co.)
Clubshell mussel	*Pleurobema clava*	E	French Creek and Allegheny River watersheds (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Mercer, Venango and Warren Co.)
Northern riffleshell	*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*	E	French Creek and Allegheny River watersheds (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Mercer, Venango and Warren Co.)
PLANTS			
Northeastern bulrush	*Scirpus ancistrochaetus*	E	Current - Adams, Bedford, Blair, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Huntingdon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Perry, Snyder and Union Co. Historic - Northampton Co.
Small-whorled pogonia	*Isotria medeoloides*	T	Current - Centre, Chester and Venango Co. Historic - Berks, Greene, Monroe, Montgomery and Philadelphia Co.

[1] *E = Endangered, T = Threatened, PE = Proposed Endangered, PT = Proposed Threatened, C = Candidate* *Revised 12/05/00*

[2] *Shortnose sturgeon is under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service*

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
315 SOUTH ALLEN ST., SUITE 322, STATE COLLEGE, PA 16801

FEDERALLY LISTED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES (in Pennsylvania)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status[1]	Distribution
FISHES			
Shortnose sturgeon[2]	*Acipenser brevirostrum*	E	Delaware River & other Atlantic coastal waters
REPTILES			
Bog turtle	*Clemmys muhlenbergii*	T	Current - Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Delaware, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton and York Co. Historic - Crawford, Mercer and Philadelphia Co.
Eastern massasauga rattlesnake	*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*	C	Current - Butler, Crawford, Mercer and Venango Co. Historic - Allegheny and Lawrence Co.
BIRDS			
Bald eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	T	Suitable habitats across the state. Recent nesting in Butler, Cameron, Centre, Chester, Crawford, Dauphin, Erie, Forest, Huntingdon, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mercer, Northumberland, Pike, Tioga, Venango, Warren and York Co. Wintering concentrations occur near ice-free sections of rivers, lakes and reservoirs, including the Delaware River.
Piping plover	*Charadrius melodus*	E	Presque Isle (Erie County). Migratory. No nesting in Pennsylvania since mid-1950s.
MAMMALS			
Indiana bat	*Myotis sodalis*	E	Winter hibernacula: Armstrong, Blair, Lawrence, Luzerne, Mifflin and Somerset Co.
MOLLUSKS			
Dwarf wedgemussel	*Alasmidonta heterodon*	E	Current - Delaware River (Wayne Co.). Historic - Delaware River watershed (Bucks, Carbon, Chester and Philadelphia Co.); Susquehanna River watershed (Lancaster Co.)
Clubshell mussel	*Pleurobema clava*	E	French Creek and Allegheny River watersheds (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Mercer, Venango and Warren Co.)
Northern riffleshell	*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*	E	French Creek and Allegheny River watersheds (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Mercer, Venango and Warren Co.)
PLANTS			
Northeastern bulrush	*Scirpus ancistrochaetus*	E	Current - Adams, Bedford, Blair, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Huntingdon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Perry, Snyder and Union Co. Historic - Northampton Co.
Small-whorled pogonia	*Isotria medeoloides*	T	Current - Centre, Chester and Venango Co. Historic - Berks, Greene, Monroe, Montgomery and Philadelphia Co.

[1] *E = Endangered, T = Threatened, PE = Proposed Endangered, PT = Proposed Threatened, C = Candidate* *Revised 12/05/00*

[2] *Shortnose sturgeon is under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service*

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
315 SOUTH ALLEN ST., SUITE 322, STATE COLLEGE, PA 16801

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Bureau for Historic Preservation
Commonwealth Keystone Building, 2nd Floor
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0093
www.phmc.state.pa.us

July 22, 2002

Kimberly Parson
URS Corporation
561 Cedar Lane
Florence, NJ 08518-2511

Re: ER# **2000-0841-063-E**
STB; Phase I/II Archaeological Investigations for the Proposed Norfolk Southern Railway Company's Saltsburg to Clarksburg Rail Line, Armstrong Township, Indiana County, PA

Dear Ms. Parson:

The Bureau for Historic Preservation (the State Historic Preservation Office) has reviewed the above named project in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980 and 1992, and the regulations (36 CFR Part 800) of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. These requirements include consideration of the project's potential effect upon both historic and archaeological resources.

This report meets our standards and specifications as outlined in Cultural Resource Management in Pennsylvania: Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (BHP 1991) and the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines for the treatment of archaeological properties. In our opinion:

1. The portion of 36IN158 in the ROW is not eligible for listing on the National Register and requires no further work.

2. NS Area 5 (36IN425) is not eligible for listing on the National Register and requires no further work.

3. NS Area 6 (36IN426) should not be recorded in the Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey and requires no further work.

4. NS Area 7 (36IN427) should not be recorded in the Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey and requires no further work.

5. The Reed Site (Cribb Site) (36IN424), the portion of 36IN157 in the proposed ROW, the portion of 36IN160 in the proposed ROW, and Oliver IV (NS Area 8) (36IN428) are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and will be adversely affected by project activities.

A Phase III investigation should be conducted on these site areas to mitigate the adverse affects of the proposed undertaking. We suggest several more controlled surface collections, block excavations, and then mechanical stripping. The resources should be evaluated within the context of the known resources in the watershed (below) and research questions should be formulated to address specific questions stemming from a synthesis of the known resources.

This mitigation should initially involve evaluating and presenting what historic and prehistoric site types are present by time period and accessing curated collections when possible for comparative resources.

(18) Lower Allegheny River: Watershed C	
Sites in watershed	340
Datable prehistoric sites	164
Upland datable sites	61
Prehistoric sites with features	13
Stratified datable prehistoric sites	8
Historic sites	39

Please send four copies of the final report (one unbound and all with original photographs) for our files and distribution to the various repositories. Append a signed gift agreement for archaeological collections to the final report and state where and when the collection will be permanently curated. The curated collections are an important part of the data that make archaeological sites significant. Making collections accessible enables future research to build on the discoveries of the past, makes research replicable, and allows us to share the information we learn from cultural resource management projects with the public through exhibits. If the State Museum in Harrisburg will not be the final repository for collections, then additional documentation in the form of detailed photographs and measurements will be required to facilitate future research.

If you need further information in this matter please consult Chan Funk at (717) 772-0924 or pfunk@state.pa.us.

Sincerely,

Jean Cutler

Jean Cutler, Director

cc: Chris Caperton, Public Affairs Management (Fax: 202-955-1436)
STB
JC/PSF

APPENDIX C

CENSUS DATA

U.S. Census Bureau

State and County *QuickFacts*

QuickFacts Main | FAQs | What's New

Indiana County, Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania counties - view map
Select a county Go
Locate a county by place name

Select a state
USA QuickFacts

Follow the ? link for definition and source information.

Browse more data sets for Indiana County, Pennsylvania

	People QuickFacts	Indiana County	Pennsylvania
?	Population, 2000	89,605	12,281,054
?	Population, percent change, 1990 to 2000	-0.4%	3.4%
?	Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2000	4.9%	5.9%
?	Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2000	21.1%	23.8%
?	Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2000	14.9%	15.6%
?	White persons, percent, 2000 (a)	96.9%	85.4%
?	Black or African American persons, percent, 2000 (a)	1.6%	10.0%
?	American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2000 (a)	0.1%	0.1%
?	Asian persons, percent, 2000 (a)	0.7%	1.8%
?	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, percent, 2000 (a)	Z	Z
?	Persons reporting some other race, percent, 2000 (a)	0.2%	1.5%
?	Persons reporting two or more races, percent, 2000	0.6%	1.2%
?	Female persons, percent, 2000	51.5%	51.7%
?	Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2000 (b)	0.5%	3.2%
?	White persons, not of Hispanic/Latino origin, percent, 2000	96.5%	84.1%
?	High school graduates, persons 25 years and over, 1990	39,503	5,878,654
?	College graduates, persons 25 years and over, 1990	7,712	1,412,746
?	Housing units, 2000	37,250	5,249,750
?	Homeownership rate, 2000	71.7%	71.3%
?	Households, 2000	34,123	4,777,003
?	Persons per household, 2000	2.47	2.48
?	Households with persons under 18, percent, 2000	29.8%	32.6%
?	Median household money income, 1997 model-based estimate	$31,510	$37,267
?	Persons below poverty, percent, 1997 model-based estimate	15.4%	10.9%
?	Children below poverty, percent, 1997 model-based estimate	21.5%	16.6%

	Business QuickFacts	Indiana County	Pennsylvania
?	Private nonfarm establishments, 1999	2,028	293,491
?	Private nonfarm employment, 1999	24,698	4,986,591
?	Private nonfarm employment, percent change 1990-1999	4.6%	8.4%

Nonemployer establishments, 1998	4,709	613,272
Manufacturers shipments, 1997 ($1000)	344,098	172,193,216
Retail sales, 1997 ($1000)	723,586	109,948,462
Retail sales per capita, 1997	$8,116	$9,150
Minority-owned firms, percent of total, 1997	2.3%	5.9%
Women-owned firms, percent of total, 1997	20.7%	24.2%
Housing units authorized by building permits, 2000	335	41,076
Federal funds and grants, 2000 ($1000)	439,380	73,715,210
Local government employment - full-time equivalent, 1997	2,366	365,556

Geography QuickFacts	Indiana County	Pennsylvania
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	829	44,817
Persons per square mile, 2000	108.1	274.0
Metropolitan Area	None	

(a) Includes persons reporting only one race.
(b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

FN: Footnote on this item for this area in place of data
NA: Not available
D: Suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential information
X: Not applicable
S: Suppressed; does not meet publication standards
Z: Value greater than zero but less than half unit of measure shown
F: Fewer than 100 firms

Data Quality Statement

What do you think of our new QuickFacts? Send comments to quickfacts@lists.census.gov

Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, County Business Patterns, 1997 Economic Census, Minority- and Women-Owned Business, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report, 1997 Census of Governments

Last Revised: Wednesday, 21-Nov-2001 12:50:05 EST

Browse more data sets for Indiana County, Pennsylvania

APPENDIX D

FUEL CALCULATIONS

Energy Savings in Truck-to-Rail Diversions

If the Saltsburg Connection is approved and the Keystone Project is completed, NS anticipates that it would transport approximately 3.3 million tons of Pittsburgh Seam coal per year to the Keystone Plant via rail. This would result in a commensurate reduction in the amount of Central Pennsylvania coal transported by truck to the Keystone Plant. Fuel efficiency for rail is significantly greater than fuel efficiency for trucks.

NS would realize fuel efficiencies of 702.9 gross ton-mile (GTM)/gallon for the rail transport of 3.3 million tons of coal, compared to an average truck (medium to long haul) fuel efficiency of 140 GTM/gallon) for the same amount of coal transported. This rail diversion would make rail transportation more than five times as fuel-efficient per mile as transportation by truck. The expected increase in coal transported via rail and the commensurate decrease in coal delivered by truck would significantly reduce the amount of diesel fuel expended to haul each ton of coal to Keystone Plant. Thus, one million tons of coal transported by truck would require about 7,140 gallons of diesel fuel per mile, whereas one million tons of coal transported by locomotive would require only about 1,425 gallons per mile. The analysis of the fuel savings is based on the following information provided by NS:

1. Distance traveled by rail to deliver Pittsburgh Seam coal to the Keystone Plant via the current route is approximately 443 miles round-trip; distance via the proposed route is approximately 341 miles round-trip.

2. Each train operated over the current route transports approximately 10,800 tons of coal (100 carloads) to the Plant; each train operated over the proposed route would transport approximately 14,040 tons of coal (130 carloads) to the Plant.

3. A fuel efficiency factor of 702.9 gross ton-miles per gallon applies to Norfolk Southern trains.

4. Distance traveled by truck to deliver Central Pennsylvania coal to the Keystone Plant (mine to Plant) is approximately 41.26 miles, without including the daily round-trip distance by truck from origin to mine.

5. Each truckload transports approximately 23 tons of coal from Central Pennsylvania mines to the Plant.

6. The fuel efficiency factor for the trucks delivering coal to Keystone Plant is 140 gross ton-miles per gallon.